# THE

# Brereton Diaries

## THE WAR IN THE AIR
## IN THE
## PACIFIC, MIDDLE EAST
## AND EUROPE

*3 October 1941 – 8 May 1945*

BY

LEWIS H. BRERETON

*Lieutenant General, U.S.A.*

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TO

THE MEN, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO
BOMBED THE PLOESTI OIL REFINERIES
AUGUST 1, 1943

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# PREFACE

THIS book is a record of events of World War II as I saw them. No attempt was made to write a history of the war.

I was fortunate in serving in most Theaters of Operations and seeing action in many of the important campaigns of the war. Even before war broke out, I realized that an accurate on-the-spot account of what happened and my impressions at the time would have considerable historical value and interest for me. After World War I, I resolved that if we were ever to have another conflict, I would try to keep a daily account of events as they happened in my own sphere. I am sure that others have tried, like myself, to reconstruct at some later date what happened and found that memory is not only short but tricky.

So far as possible, this journal was written in the field. Many of the notes and data made in the Philippines were lost to enemy action or destroyed in the interests of security. However, sufficient records were available, and events were so fresh in my memory and to my staff that I believe the Philippines story is as accurate as it can be. Fortunately, this phase and the Java campaign were completed prior to our evacuation of Java, as it was impossible to take with me anything but my own compiled notes. I was fortunate, too, in having the assistance of members of my Far Eastern Air Force staff, including Frank Brady, Gene Eubank, Charlie Caldwell, Emmett O'Donnell, Reggie Vance, and my aide, Norman Lewellyn.

I did not think seriously of publication until after I arrived in the Middle East. Two persons influenced me—Frank Gervasi, war correspondent of *Collier's*, and Captain George Kirksey, a former newspaperman who joined the Ninth Air

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Force in the Western Desert in June 1943. They pointed out separately, but in almost the same vein, that a single commander's version as a participant in many different events of the war might have value as a public document.

When the Ninth Air Force moved from Africa to England, I appealed to George Kirksey, who later was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and joined my headquarters staff, to aid me in gathering, documenting, and editing the material for this book. He constantly prodded me to make observations and comments which otherwise would have been left out.

In the last year of the war, the job of trying to even record the daily happenings became so difficult that I wondered if I was not undertaking too big a job. Except that it furnished definite relaxation, I probably would have abandoned the task. On these occasions Kirksey would say: "This is the greatest news story in our lifetime. Let's get it all down as it happens and worry about whipping it into shape later." His encouragement, assistance, and editorial judgment were invaluable.

Many others offered helpful encouragement and advice, and I should like to mention a few of them: Bill Courtney, *Collier's;* Demaree Bess, *The Saturday Evening Post;* and Col. Edward J. Nolan and Lieut. Col. Charles Morgan, the last two members of my staff.

So far as is humanly possible, this is an accurate account, through my eyes, of what happened from the day I landed in the Philippines until Germany capitulated.

LEWIS H. BRERETON

*Tampa, Florida.*
*1 March 1946.*

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# CONTENTS

PART I

PHILIPPINES: Far East Air Force

3

PART II

JAVA-AUSTRALIA: Abdacom

71

PART III

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA: Tenth Air Force

105

PART IV

MIDDLE EAST and MEDITERRANEAN

Middle East Air Force
(LATER, Ninth Air Force)

135

PART V

ENGLAND: Ninth Air Force

213

PART VI

ENGLAND: First Allied Airborne Army

329

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# PART I

# PHILIPPINE PHASE

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# PHILIPPINES: Far East Air Force

TAMPA, FLORIDA, *3 October 1941.* Brig. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, Chief of Staff of the Air Corps, called me from Washington.

"Lewie," he said, "Hap Arnold wants you to come to Washington immediately to confer with him about a permanent change of command. When can you be here?"

"What's it all about?" I asked.

"I can give you no further information. You must report to him without delay."

"I'll leave by plane tomorrow morning."

The call upset my plans. I was busy reorganizing the Third Air Force for the coming Carolina maneuvers. Promoted to Major General in July, and given command of the Third Air Force, I had one of the toughest jobs of my military career. We were in a race against time to remedy the unpreparedness of the Air Corps due to lack of appropriations.

In the recent maneuvers in the East Texas-Louisiana area, the largest-scale war games ever held in the United States, we had encountered many difficult problems concerning the Air Forces participation.

The Third Air Force's mission in the Louisiana maneuvers was to set up and operate two Air Corps Maintenance Commands for the two air arms supporting the opposing armies. It was a difficult job because we lacked sufficient trained staff to handle the maze of organization and detail. On the basis of the lessons learned, I was now reorganizing the mainte-



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nance and supply setup for the Carolina maneuvers. It required undivided attention.

In the Louisiana maneuvers the ground forces, for the first time in my experience, demonstrated a reasonably accurate assessment of airpower from a purely tactical viewpoint. But disturbing things had been happening in Poland, Norway, and France, to open our eyes.

Too many of our leaders had been preparing our military organization on the basis of the last war. They forgot Marshal Foch's axiom of war stated in 1922:

> The military mind always imagines that the next war will be upon the same lines as the last. That has never been the case, and never will be. The greatest factor in the next war will obviously be aircraft. The potentialities of aircraft attack upon a large scale are almost incalculable.

The Luftwaffe's vital role in Germany's pattern of war was plain to all. The airplane had become a most potent weapon. By this time we had a few B-17s, but the ground forces, although impressed with the B-17's size, speed, and firepower, did not appreciate its strategic value. They still adhered to the theory that aircraft were mere supporting weapons to the Army.

The Douglas A-20, which was the newest and fastest of the light bombers, was more to the liking of the ground force. This was due principally to the fact that the A-20 was used as a tactical weapon and employed in close support of the Infantry.

In addition to the new attention to airpower in our Army, there was another important development in the Louisiana maneuvers. We discovered a leader who was immediately earmarked by all who came in contact with him as certain to become a powerful figure in our new Army. I refer to Dwight D. Eisenhower, who served as Chief of Staff on Lieut. Gen. Walter Kreuger's Third Army. It was Colonel Eisenhower's brilliant work which played a big part in the success of the Third Army in the maneuvers.



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I had come in contact with Colonel Eisenhower the year previous and again earlier in the summer. He was retiring, hard-working, and content to let others take credit for work for which he was responsible. His work in the Louisiana maneuvers so pleased General Marshall that he was promoted to Brigadier General in late September.

ENROUTE TO WASHINGTON, *4 October 1941.* As I flew to Washington I had some misgivings about my future. When I went to the Louisiana maneuvers I had had no great amount of experience in maintenance work. Many problems arose which could not be satisfactorily solved. Our air force was lacking in equipment and trained personnel. We simply could not put supplies in the places where they should be and in the quantities required. I was quite prepared to be told on arrival in Washington that our participation in Louisiana had been unsatisfactory and that I was "canned" as commander of the Third Air Force. I wondered to what "Siberia" I might be banished this time. It had happened to me before.

WASHINGTON, *5 October 1941.* I reported to Generals Arnold and Spaatz. My mind was eased immediately about my future. Instead of being relieved of my command because of shortcomings of the Third Air Force during the Louisiana maneuvers, I was detailed for immediate duty overseas.

General Arnold informed me that I was to go to the Philippines at the request of Gen. Douglas MacArthur to assume command of the Far East Air Forces, which it had been decided to reinforce as quickly as means would permit. Apparently I had been selected because of the fact that the buildup of the Far East Air Force in its early stages would be largely one of preparing services and facilities. Airplanes, airfields, pilots, and all the things needed to run an air force were practically nonexistent in the Philippines, and it required someone with supply and maintenance knowledge, as



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well as tactical background, to carry out General MacArthur's program.

I spent some time with General Arnold talking over the situation. The ultimate air force contemplated for the defense of the Philippines was approximately four Bombardment Groups, four Fighter Groups, the necessary air warning installations, and various associated air and ground units, such as reconnaissance squadrons, mobile air depots, and other services. The additional Bombardment Squadrons would be dispatched in the immediate future by way of the Pacific Air Ferry Route. The Fighter Groups and the Interceptor Command units would not be forthcoming for several months.

After learning these facts, I told General Arnold I considered it extremely hazardous to place bomber forces in any sensitive area without first having provided the necessary fighter cover and air warning service. I strongly urged the necessity for providing air warning services and fighters before sending bombers to a location that was exceedingly vulnerable to surprise attack, as were the Philippines.

WASHINGTON, *6 October 1941.* Discussions continued on the Far Eastern situation, and the difficulties to be faced in strengthening the air forces in the Philippines. Although Fighter Forces and Air Warning Services were not adequately trained and equipment was lacking, a high-level decision had already been made to send the bombardment units as planned. In fact, nine B-17s were already enroute to the Phillppines. The other units would be sent as soon as organization, training, and equipment were completed.

General Arnold, fully aware of the dangers, faced the most difficult of problems. The expansion of the Air Forces was well under way. However, aircraft production was in its infancy compared with Air Force requirements. With insufficient equipment and trained personnel in sight for the next 12 months, the twin problem of providing Air Forces for the defense of the United States and providing air strength for



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the defense of the colonial possessions and the Philippines could not be met with anything like adequate security in any one place.

One very serious shortcoming was the lack of trained personnel and equipment for air warning services. The electrical manufacturing concerns and telephone and telegraph companies were contributing a great effort towards the solution of these problems. However, with the system of priorities in existence, the demands for communication and signal equipment of all kinds for the Army, Navy, and Air Forces was out of all proportion to the capabilities of production for many months to come.

I fully understood the inadequacy of the Air Forces. We were definitely a third-rate air power. In the Third Air Force in September we had only three Bombardment Groups and a mere 17 qualified first pilots and 22 qualified co-pilots for four-motored bombers. Fighter aircraft and training were conspicuously lacking. When I left for Washington, the Third Air Force had 15 qualified fighter pilots. The other continental Air Forces were in much the same plight. In the entire Air Force combat commands on 1 October we had only 64 first pilots and 90 co-pilots qualified for four-engine bombers; 97 first pilots and 108 co-pilots qualified for two-engine mediums, and 171 Pursuit pilots; and not one qualified dive bomber pilot.

The following table shows the trained personnel in the Air Force Combat Command on 1 October 1941, and reveals the desperate shortage of qualified combat men:

| | BOMB. HEAVY | BOMB. MEDIUM | BOMB. LIGHT | PURSUIT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| First Pilots | 64 | 72 | 25 | 171 |
| Co-Pilots | 90 | 108 | | |
| Navigators | 56 | 46 | | |
| Bombardiers | 66 | 38 | 34 | |
| Radio Operators | 129 | 117 | | |
| Aerial Engineers | 169 | 103 | | |



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In the entire country we had just two complete crews who had had as much as one hour of combat training in four-engine bombers above 20,000 feet. This was a year after the Battle of Britain, in which air battles took place at 30,000 feet and above. In the entire Air Force Combat Command we had only 33 heavy-bomber crews trained for combat on October 1. In the medium- and light-bomber class we had a mere 20 trained crews. It was bad enough having insufficient pilots, but what was even worse was the fact that we had few airplanes. The shameful neglect of military aviation during the past 20 years had left in sad state the nation that gave the world the airplane.

WASHINGTON, *7 October 1941.* General George Marshall gave me further instructions.

"When can you leave for the Philippines?" he asked.

"As soon as my instructions are complete and transportation can be provided."

General Marshall, in giving me detailed instructions about the Philippine situation, stressed the change in the strategic importance of the Islands. He gave me some studies prepared by General MacArthur and his staff, which presented a clear picture of the Far East situation. I was given a secret directive, and certain confidential instructions to be delivered to General MacArthur, recently designated Commanding General of the U. S. Army Forces in the Far East.

I repeated to General Marshall my opinion that if the situation in the Far East was critical, or was expected to be so, the presence of strong and unprotected bombardment units might easily be a decisive factor to incite an aggressive enemy to air attack. The enemy would have everything to gain by neutralizing our bomber force before the arrival of units necessary for their protection. I was told by General Marshall, as I had previously been told by General Arnold, that the hazards involved were recognized. Both were aware that it was a calculated risk. Their decision was to build up the heavy-bomber strength as quickly as possible and reinforce it



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as soon as the fighters and air warning services were available.

When I left General Marshall the newspaper headlines said:

YANKEES DEFEAT DODGERS, 3-1, AND WIN WORLD'S SERIES
NAZI STRIKE AT MOSCOW IN TWIN THRUST BY THREE MILLION
WENDELL WILLKIE TO FIGHT NEUTRALITY ACT

As a result of my talk with General Marshall I had the distinct impression that we were moving toward a crisis but that the general public was far behind the War Department in its appreciation of the situation.

WASHINGTON, *8–9–10 October 1941.* The last three days in Washington I conferred with various members of the Air Forces and War Department about the Far East and Philippine situation. I outlined the shortcomings of Air Force equipment and the priority in which I wished them filled. Key personnel for command jobs was requested.

In conversations with Brig. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, of the General Staff's War Plans Division, he amplified the instructions I had received from the Chief of Staff. My objections to sending heavy bombers into the Philippine area without adequate protection also were voiced to General Gerow.

It was well known in the War Department at this time that there were only two landing fields in the Philippines from which heavy bombers could operate in the wet season. These were Clark Field, about 65 miles from Manila in the north central part of Luzon, and Del Monte in Northern Mindanao, some 600 miles to the south. The landing area at Nichols Field near Manila was being enlarged to accommodate heavy bombers, but would not be completed for some months.

In coöperation with the ABC powers (Australia, Britain, and China), it was expected that bases would be provided from China to Australia for the operation of heavy bombers.



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The strategic situation as presented in the War Department was briefly as follows:

The Southwest Pacific and particularly the Philippine Islands were becoming an extremely sensitive area in the world war plans of the Allied Powers. The President had adopted a very severe and unconciliatory attitude towards the Japanese. Two months previously, the Japanese-Dutch trade negotiations had been broken off abruptly by the Dutch at the instigation and with the support of the Allies. This definitely ended Japan's hope of free access to the rich oil supply, rubber, and other essential war materials of the Netherlands East Indies.

It was evident that our Government was determined to put unyielding pressure on Japan and to enforce the stand which President Roosevelt had announced at this time as a basis for peaceful settlement of Japanese-American differences. The main features of the President's stand which forced the Far East into immediate strategic importance were:

(1) Japan must cease further aggression in China and withdraw her forces;

(2) Japan must sever her affiliations and collaboration with the Axis powers;

(3) Japan must cease further penetration into Indo-China and announce her renunciation of further expansion to the south and southwest.

The announcement of these points as a basis for amicable settlement of the Japanese-American differences was considered in some quarters as a virtual ultimatum. The State Department, however, did not consider it as such, and still hoped to avoid war with Japan.

In any event it was the opinion of the War Department that hostilities, if and when they came, would not begin before 1 April 1942. Our plans for the defense of the Philippines contemplated that by April 1942 the complete air reinforcements would be in place, and in addition that very considerable land reinforcements requested by General MacArthur would be in the Philippines.



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It was the hope of our Government that the presence of a powerful air force in the Philippines, in addition to a well-trained Army, would serve as a strong argument to enforce the American viewpoint on Japan.

TAMPA, *12 October 1941.* Until my trip to Washington I had not realized how serious the War Department considered the Japanese situation. While I did not feel that I was being sent out on anything like a hopeless task, I was made to understand that it was of the utmost urgency to be prepared to act at any time with the equipment at hand.

During the past few months I have had very few public contacts, but the general feeling has seemed to be one of hopefulness that we would not be drawn into the war. Nevertheless, the European situation is so grave that it is felt that the collapse of England would most certainly involve us in war. So far as the Philippines are concerned, no one outside of official circles is paying them much attention. There was a significant item in the newspaper today. Tokyo was sending three ships to evacuate Jap nationals from the United States. This item, considered in the light of the information given me in Washington, was a bad omen.

WASHINGTON, *17 October 1941.* I left Washington by air for San Francisco with two members of my personal staff, Col. Francis M. Brady, whom I was taking as my Chief of Staff, and Col. Charles Caldwell, who was to be my G-3, and my two aides, Capt. Norman J. Lewellyn and Lieut. Edgar Wade Hampton.

SAN FRANCISCO, *21 October 1941.* After four days' delay we left for Honolulu by Pan American Clipper. Before our departure the newspapers were filled with news which made me keenly apprehensive of the Far East situation. Prince Konoye resigned and the new government of Tojo prepared to achieve quickly the limit of total war mobilization for any emergency. In Tokyo Captain Hideo Hiraide, Director of



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Naval Intelligence, stated in a public speech that relations between the U. S. and Japan "are now approaching the final parting of the ways." The press quoted Hiraide as saying: "The Imperial Navy is prepared for the worst and has completed all necessary preparations. In fact, the Imperial Navy is itching for action."

Owing to high priorities and congestion of traffic, I was able to bring only one aide, Captain Lewellyn. Lieutenant Hampton was to follow by the next Clipper, a week later.

HONOLULU, *22 October 1941.* Shortly after arrival we were informed that there would be a delay in the takeoff for the next leg because of weather. While in Honolulu we were guests of Maj. Gen. Fred Martin, Air Force Commander of the Hawaiian Islands, who had achieved distinction in 1924 as Commander of the first Army Air Corps round-the-world flight.

General Martin and I spent the morning at the Naval Air Station talking with Rear Admiral Pat Bellinger, Naval Air Commander. Not only General Martin, but the Naval and Naval Air Commanders with whom I talked, seemed thoroughly aware of the exceedingly vulnerable situation that existed. Apprehension was evident, not so much because anyone felt we were on the eve of war with Japan, as because insufficient attention had been given to provide even the minimum requirements for defense.

On my tour of Oahu I was surprised and somewhat disappointed to note the incomplete preparations against air attacks, particularly the lack of adequate air warning equipment. I visited the airfields, air warning service, and interceptor command headquarters, most of which was rudimentary, although energetic efforts were under way to improve it. Colonel Murphy, Signal Corps, formerly with the Air Force Combat Command, and an exceedingly able and energetic officer, was doing his utmost to complete the organization. The combined communication center and



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command post was in the process of construction and was expected to be in operation in the near future.

I had a long talk with General Martin about the preparedness of the Islands. He was aware that the air warning equipment and program were far short of the requirements. Admiral Bellinger said that the Navy did not have enough PBYs to carry out the necessary reconnaissance of Hawaiian waters.

I think that it was agreed by everyone in the military service who had studied the subject that the outbreak of war with Japan, if and when it ever came, would be signaled by a very strong Japanese attack with no warning, and that it was certain that this attack would be directed against the Hawaiian Islands, the Panama Canal, or the West Coast. Of these three, the direct initial attack against the West Coast looked to be the least probable, and the Hawaiian Islands the most probable.

HONOLULU, *23 October 1941.* Colonel Brady, Captain Lewellyn, and I spent a delightful day on a tour around Oahu and we expected to end up at Waikiki for a swim. The weather, however, was cold and rainy. The romance of Waikiki had to be left for the future. I am afraid I had a premonition that we might not see Waikiki for a long, long time.

ENROUTE VIA CLIPPER TO THE PHILIPPINES, *25 October 1941.* We left Honolulu today for the long haul across the Pacific. The company was congenial. Among those with whom we were soon on friendly terms were Francis Rockwell, a classmate of my brother, Bill Brereton, at Annapolis, newly promoted to Rear Admiral, going out to assume command of the Cavite Naval Station; Mr. and Mrs. R. L. (Buck and Lee) Spencer and Mr. Lou Bailey, General Motors people enroute to Rangoon to help solve the transportation problems of the Burma Road; R. G. ("Rupe") Wedemeyer, a Standard Oil man; and Group Captain Walker, RAF, enroute to New Delhi, India.



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During the flight to Midway I had some time to think over the situation. It was obvious to me—and I was not alone in this conclusion—that the whole Pacific was alive with danger. There has always been a deep sense of apprehension towards Japan among our Pacific outposts. This was particularly true of the Hawaiian Islands because of the extensive fleet installations which furnished the main base for our Pacific Fleet and the excessively large Japanese population of the Islands. It was well known to our military intelligence that the Japanese espionage was efficient and complete in Hawaii.

It seemed to me from "top secret" instructions and information given me by the War Department, talks with high-ranking Army and Navy officers, and my personal impression regarding defenses in the Hawaiian Islands, that if the future held the grave possibilities that seemed indicated, Pearl Harbor and our other military installations in Hawaii would be very vulnerable for a strong combined sea and air attack if this were executed before our defenses could be materially strengthened.

MIDWAY, *25 October 1941.* The Midway airfield was excellent. Two concrete runways had been constructed for the reception of Flying Fortresses and the defense of the island. One squadron (9 planes) of B-17s had already passed enroute to the Philippines. The antiaircraft defenses of the island were incomplete. They had a few medium and light caliber automatic weapons, with a battery of 75mm. antiaircraft artillery expected on the next transport. One Marine battalion garrisoned the island.

The air was chilly and the water cold, but Frank Brady and I took a swim. After dinner I was initiated into the mysteries of "Liar's Dice," but found myself poor competition for Buck Spencer and Lou Bailey. These two gentlemen, who had extensive experience in the overseas branch of General Motors, told me that they contemplated maintaining an enormous fleet of trucks between Burma and Chungking, transporting supplies to the Chinese. They



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expected eventually to operate approximately 1200 trucks on a basis of 66-percent serviceability.

WAKE ISLAND, *27 October 1941.* We took off from Midway at daylight for the long pull to Wake Island, and after bucking a headwind all day arrived about dusk. Time advances one day between Midway and Wake, so the 26 October was lost to us. The radio station informed us that a flight of B-17s was coming in behind us. I had scarcely left the radio hut when the first B-17 came over, followed ten minutes later by the other two. It was a fine sight to see my own outfit landing in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Lieut. Col. Gene Eubank, leading the flight, was to be my Bomber Commander. He reported to me and had dinner with us. We discussed the procedure employed in this mass flight, the longest overseas hop yet attempted by the Army. Colonel Eubank had 35 Flying Fortresses in the movement, having taken off from Albuquerque with 26 planes. Nine others, led by Maj. Emmett ("Rosy") O'Donnell, former West Point football star, preceded him. The planes had to be flown in flights of 3, 6, or 9, as the airfields in the Pacific could not accommodate any more. On leaving Wake, Colonel Eubank's route was to Port Moresby, Darwin, and then Manila. The Clipper route was to Guam and then Manila.[1]

The main difficulty in long over-water hops at this time was getting adequate weather reports. Weather-reporting facilities had not been developed to the fullest, and at this particular time of year flights to the south were certain to encounter a belt of bad weather along the equator extending as much as 15° north and south. The flights led by Colonel Eubank and Major O'Donnell blazed new trails in aviation.

WAKE ISLAND, *28 October 1941.* The next day proved too rough to take off, so we passed the hours exploring the

[1]LATER: Although it seems impossible to believe now, in October 1941 there was not a single landing field on Guam. The southern route via Port Moresby and Darwin was 2,153 miles longer.



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island and talking with the B-17 pilots. I played tennis in the afternoon and later lost $5 more playing Liar's Dice. I was improving, but at some financial sacrifice. The General Motors people were certainly experts at Liar's Dice.

I had several talks with Admiral Rockwell, one of Annapolis's outstanding crewmen whom I had known slightly at the Naval Academy, on the Far Eastern situation from the Navy viewpoint. He considered the situation grave—which, of course, was only natural since the Navy always has regarded Japan as its ultimate major enemy.

WAKE ISLAND, *29 October 1941.* Another rough day. We went to the West Beach and watched the construction gangs bringing in barges through the breakwater. It was a wonderful piece of work. In addition to landing more than a thousand tons through the rough sea, nearly 400 Marines who had been lying off shore for five days on account of rough weather were brought ashore.

WAKE ISLAND, *30 October 1941.* The third day we were finally able to leave, but after 6½ hours of bucking headwinds and avoiding a typhoon we turned back and returned to Wake. One can image the temper of the passengers that evening. No Liar's Dice. That night the Clipper arrived from Manila with 22 passengers, and, needless to say, the hotel was jammed. Frank Rockwell, Frank Brady, and I shared a room with no sleep. I don't know which of the two Franks snores the louder, but I knocked a water pitcher off the table throwing a pillow at Frank Brady.

GUAM, *31 October 1941.* Off at daybreak from Wake and an uneventful hop to Guam. Upon arrival I found that an Annapolis classmate of mine, Bob McMillan, was Governor and had arranged for Rockwell and me to stay with him. He gave us a delightful stag dinner, all women having been evacuated.



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GUAM, *1 and 2 November 1941.* It was too rough to leave on the first day, but not too rough for fishing. McMillan furnished us with a sailing launch, and Steve Bancroft, Lou Bailey, Norman Lewellyn, Walker, Wedemeyer, and myself went fishing. Our equipment consisted of two cases of beer, a bottle of Bourbon, and some rudimentary fishing tackle. No fish were caught: The sea was rough and everyone but Bailey, Bancroft, and myself was sick.[2] Walker and Lewellyn, in particular, were prize performers. Walker finally won first prize. With typical self-possession, the RAF officer gave his all to the sea, including one front false tooth. Nothing daunted, however, after giving a sickly and toothless grin he reached in his pocket and produced a spare which apparently he had saved for just such an emergency.

In my conversations with McMillan and others here, it was the general feeling of all that Guam was absolutely indefensible. Situated within 70 miles of a strongly held Japanese island, it would certainly be picked off on the outbreak of any hostilities without a chance for the garrison to escape. There were no landing strips, although construction was being started on one which would be completed within a few months. Congress had consistently refused to appropriate funds to augment the defenses of the island, which were practically nonexistent.

MANILA, *3 November 1941.* We arrived in Manila at 3 P.M. and were met at the landing stage by Brig. Gen. H. B. Claggett, Col. Hal George, Col. H. C. Richards, Col. Lawrence Churchill, and Captain Nichols. It seemed a little

[2] In passing, I'd like to explode the oft-told story that I left the Navy because I wasn't a good sailor. I have never been seasick since I left Annapolis. I left the Navy on graduation because my preference was for the Army. The only reason why I didn't attend the Military Academy was that in a competitive group of 32 applicants I finished second, and the number one boy selected West Point. That left me with no choice but to accept Annapolis, which I entered in the summer of 1907.



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ironical that I should be landing back in Manila for duty on what might be the eve of another war. I was stationed in the Philippines in 1916, and early in 1917 had gone to the U. S. on temporary duty for the purpose of testing and taking back to Corregidor some new seaplanes. But war caught me in the States and I got my orders changed to go to France. But that is another war and another story.

After checking in at the hotel and talking to General Claggett, whom I was relieving, I 'phoned General MacArthur at his penthouse apartment on the roof of the Manila Hotel, announcing my arrival.

"Where are you, Lewis?" General MacArthur asked.

"Here in the hotel, sir," I replied.

"Come up immediately," he said.

I was very cordially received by General MacArthur, whom I apparently had fished out of his bath inasmuch as he came out in his dressing gown. I had not seen him, except under purely official circumstances, since the last war. He recalled the occasion on which we had served together. I was in command of the 12th Observation Squadron in the Vosges sector in the spring of 1919 and my first operations were in support of the 42nd Division, commanded at that time by General Menoher with General MacArthur as Chief of Staff.

Now General MacArthur, eager as a small boy to hear all the news, slapped me on the back and threw his arm over my shoulder.

"Well, Lewis," he said, "I have been waiting for you. I knew you were coming and I am damned glad to see you. You have been the subject of considerable conversation between myself, George Marshall, and Hap Arnold. What have you brought for me?"

I told him that my papers, including the secret letter from General Marshall, were in my brief case, which had been taken to Army Hqs. for safekeeping. In the course of an informal discussion I outlined to him the reinforcements, both air and ground, which would arrive shortly, and assured him that the War Department's intention was to give him the



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fullest coöperation. He was so interested and enthusiastic about what I told him that he considered for a moment the advisability of sending for the papers and asking his Chief of Staff, Brig. Gen. Richard Sutherland, to come over. However, he decided against it and told me to come in at 8 o'clock tomorrow. I was with him twenty or thirty minutes. He was dressing, I believe, to go to Commissioner Sayre's home for dinner. Mrs. MacArthur was out with their child at the swimming pool.

During our discussions General MacArthur was extremely interested in the personal attitude and comments of General Marshall, General Arnold, General Gerow, and others in the War Department. He referred to them by their first names and asked numerous questions about the conversations. I gained the impression that he was trying to recreate the atmosphere and scene in order to make his own evaluation of the conversation. He is an extremely sensitive man, and if he weren't so coldly logical I would think that he was intuitive.

MANILA, *4 November 1941.* I spent the next morning with General MacArthur and gave him the letter from General Marshall marked "For the Eyes of General MacArthur Only." After he had read it and another communication I had for him, he acted like a small boy who has been told that he is going to get a holiday from school. He jumped up from his desk and threw his arms around me and said, "Lewis, you are just as welcome as the flowers in May." He then turned to his Chief of Staff and said, "Dick, they are going to give us everything we have asked for."

After discussing with Sutherland the contents of the letters, he then gave me the most concise and clear-cut estimate of the situation that I had yet received. In his opinion, which was the same as that of most informed men, it seemed likely that nothing would happen before 1 April 1942. The mobilization and training schedule of the Philippine Depart-



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ment and of the Philippine Army was based on that assumption.[3]

I received definite instructions and an outline of policy that would guide me in developing and preparing the Far East Air Force. The very clearest of ideas existed in General MacArthur's mind as to what needed to be done. The fact remains, however, that there was neither equipment nor money nor manpower organized and available for the immediate 100-percent implementation of the program required. It was a question of improvisation all along the line.

I told General MacArthur that I want a week to inspect the installations and, as various conditions come to light that need attention, I would like to make recommendations and get construction under way immediately. It was agreed that I would get together with General MacArthur's Chief of Staff, G-4, Quartermaster, and Engineer, and work out a continuing construction program.

"Okay, you and Dick [General Sutherland] go to work, and let me know if there are any difficulties," General MacArthur said.

In the afternoon I inspected the headquarters of the Far East Air Force, a former civilian flying school and commercial airline building on Nielson Field. The personnel, both officers and enlisted men, was entirely inadequate, and to a considerable extent inexperienced and not organized to carry out the functions of an Air Force headquarters. The enlisted strength approximated 80. No officer of General Staff qualifications was on duty. There was no G-1 [Personnel], no G-4 [Supply], no Quartermaster, no Medical Officer, no Communications Section, no qualified weather officer. A signal was dispatched to Washington immediately through Army headquarters requesting additional staff officers, a Headquarters

[3] LATER: General MacArthur's estimate was correct in every particular, as it turned out, except the date for the beginning of hostilities, which I feel now may have been more of a hope than a considered opinion.



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& Headquarters Squadron, and a signal organization for the Far East Air Force.

MANILA, *9 November 1941.* I spent the past five days inspecting the Air Force installations on Luzon and also flew to Mindanao to inspect the Del Monte landing fields. Conditions were disappointing. The idea of an imminent war seemed far removed from the minds of most. Work hours, training schedules, and operating procedure were still based on the good old days of peace conditions in the tropics. There was a comprehensive project on paper for the construction of additional airfields, but unfortunately little money had been provided prior to my arrival. The construction necessary had to be accomplished through civilian and government agencies of the Philippine Commonwealth.

Information was correct that there were only two Philippine airfields from which heavy bombers could operate. One was Clark Field, adjoining Fort Stotsenberg, where all heavy bombers that had arrived were stationed, and where adequate housing facilities existed. The other was at Del Monte on Mindanao, where there was an adequate airfield but no facilities whatsoever. The runways at Nichols Field on the edge of Manila were being lengthened and a new runway constructed. The time of completion was estimated as about 1 January.

The season was favorable for the construction of landing fields, but it was a big job to get anything accomplished under the existing circumstances. Most of the contractors and the equipment on the Island were already working on Navy projects. The problem of dealing with Civil Service personnel and civilian workers was fraught with difficulties, and the relations between the Army and the Philippine government further complicated the construction program. Col. Hugh J. Casey, General MacArthur's engineer, saved the day by getting the program under way with almost no facilities. As an example of our difficulties, we had called on the municipal authorities to furnish us with three road graders. No re-



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sponse. For three consecutive days I passed two road graders standing idle alongside the road from my headquarters to the airfield. On the third day I told my Chief of Staff to get the road graders and start using them.

The Far East Air Force's combat planes consisted of:

HEAVIES —35 B-17s.

MEDIUMS—Two squadrons of B-18s, plus some spares.

FIGHTERS—72 P-40s, 28 P-35s, plus approximately two squadrons of fighters in the Philippine Air Force.

Half the fighters were stationed at Nichols Field, the remainder at Clark Field. As additional landing fields at Iba and Del Carmen were completed, the disposition of the fighters would be changed in order to provide better cover for Clark Field and the Manila Bay area. The heavies and mediums were all based at Clark Field. There were no antiaircraft defenses available at either of these fields or at any other airfield in the Philippines. The available antiaircraft artillery in the Islands was concentrated on Corregidor. The air warning service was pitifully inadequate. One radar set was being erected and plans were under way for others to be set up.

A large proportion of our personnel was still undergoing training in the States. In addition, radar specialists were being received from the States to train the personnel on hand.

The air depot at Nichols Field was completely inadequate and plans for expansion to care for enormous increase in the Air Forces had not been implemented. A project for the depot expansion had been submitted to the War Department some months before. It had just been returned for modification and revised estimate of funds.

There were no spare parts of any kind for P-40s, nor was there so much as an extra washer or nut for a Flying Fortress. There wasn't a spare motor for either Fighter or Bombardment planes. There were few tools of any kind available with which an advance depot could begin rudimentary repair and maintenance.



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My tactical inspection of Clark Field was much more encouraging. The tactical units were carrying out training with enthusiasm and efficiency. While everyone was suffering from lack of equipment, encouraging steps were being made to prepare the units for active service.

The Philippine Air Force presented a greater problem. Owing to lack of equipment, they were carrying out their training with such obsolete aircraft as the old Martin B-10 bomber and the P-36 pursuit plane. The pilots, men of good families and education, struck me as being very keen.

On November 6 I issued a new training schedule which caused some dissatisfaction because it increased work hours to the maximum. At least 40 percent of all flight training must include night operations. One squadron of bombers and one squadron of fighters were put on constant readiness.[4] Maintenance and upkeep of all aircraft were to be carried out day and night until completed. Aircraft were not to be placed out of commission during flying hours for routine check, or for 20- and 40-hour inspection. The air depot was placed on a 16-hour basis with two shifts. As a result of this last provision, I received a severe letter of protest through channels from the Civil Service Commission. When I went to see General Sutherland about the Civil Service complaints, he told me he would handle the matter; in the meantime I was to go ahead and do whatever I thought was necessary. The depot stayed on a 16-hour basis.

An airbase detachment moved to Del Monte, and gasoline and ammunition, including bombs, were sent there within a few days. The Interceptor Command under Col. Hal George was placed on a 24-hour operating basis. Additional personnel was furnished and trained for 8-hour details. Arrangements were made through the Filipino Army for daily interceptor exercises. Observers, watchers, and telephone operators, all of whom were native volunteers, were enrolled and placed on a salary basis. This last step encountered consider-

[4] I.e., takeoff in 3 hours.



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able opposition because funds had to be supplied by the Philippine Government.

All this time relations between the United States and Japan were depreciating fast. Japan issued a 7-point proclamation for the U. S. to comply with or "face the alternatives." The proclamation was in direct opposition to the President's policy.

On November 6, when Saburo Kurusu left Tokyo as a special envoy to assist the Japanese Ambassador Nomura in negotiations with the U. S., he told his American-born son: "Maybe I will not be able to come back. Look after the family." In Washington it was reported that the chances for a settlement were about one in ten. In Manila—4800 miles nearer to Tokyo than to Washington—the chances seemed to be about one in ten thousand. Stopping over night in Manila, Kurusu told friends that there was "not much hope" that his mission to Washington would be successful.

The same day that Kurusu passed through Manila, General MacArthur ordered me to proceed by air to Australia for the purpose of surveying the Trans-Pacific Air Ferry Route from Australia to the Philippines and Java, which also included a project for extending the route to Singapore and China. My instructions were to begin preparation of bases in Northern Australia and throughout the Malay Barrier from which American air forces could operate. General MacArthur was far-sighted. Never at any time did he fail to realize that, if a campaign in the Philippines was unsuccessful, it would be essential for the Pacific campaign to provide adequate air defense of Northern Australia, the Dutch Indies, and the Malay Peninsula.

MANILA, *10 November 1941.* In talks with General MacArthur before leaving for Australia, I got the impression that his belief in 1 April as the earliest probable date when hostilities might commence had been severely shaken since my earlier conferences with him. I think that he was particularly impressed by the fact that Kurusu, who had previously been



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discredited by his own government, had been called back from retirement to go to Washington. General MacArthur's feeling was that Kurusu was being used as a stooge and that unless the talks in Washington were favorable to Japan he would again be discredited. General MacArthur had more insight into the Japanese political situation than anyone else I knew.

I noticed again one of General MacArthur's traits: he cannot talk sitting down. It seems to me that the more clearly he enunciates his ideas, the more vigorous his walking becomes. He is one of the most beautiful talkers I have ever heard and, while his manner might be considered a bit on the theatrical side, it is just a part of his personality and an expression of his character. There is never any doubt as to what he means and what he wants.

Another impressive characteristic is General MacArthur's immaculate appearance. He is one of the best-dressed soldiers in the world. Even in the hot tropical climate of Manila, where we wore cotton shirts and trousers which for most people became wet and wilted in an hour, I have never seen him looking otherwise than as if he had just put on a fresh uniform.

DARWIN, AUSTRALIA, *13 November 1941.* I left Clark Field 11 November with Colonel Eubank, commander of the 19th Bomb Group, at the controls, and after a somewhat stormy passage arrived 14 hours later at Batchelor Field, Darwin, Australia. The facilities at Batchelor Field were rudimentary. Nothing was being done at Batchelor Field or at Darwin to prepare these bases for the transit of heavy bombers.

We had already brought 35 heavy bombers from the States via the trans-Pacific ferry route [Hawaii, Midway, Wake, Port Moresby, Darwin, and Manila], and there were three out of condition, including one wrecked on Batchelor Field owing to the condition of the runways.

I had unlimited authority from General MacArthur to obligate funds and initiate action. Fortunately Group Captain



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Scherger, RAAF, in command of the station at Darwin, was energetic, efficient, and very impatient. With his able assistance and that of Brigadier Blair, the local commander, I was able in the less than two days I spent there to initiate work on the Batchelor Field runway in a hurried attempt to prepare the field for additional bombers due any day from the States. It was the old problem of trying to beat the rains. The local situation was delicate because of the fact that I was 2,000 miles from Melbourne and had not yet reported to Air Chief Marshal Burnett, Chief of the Air Staff. Scherger was blessed with sufficient initiative to agree to continue work even through lacking orders to do so, with the understanding that I would straighten out the situation upon my arrival in Melbourne.

TOWNSVILLE, AUSTRALIA, *14 November 1941.* The next ferry stop was at Townsville, also the northern Air District Headquarters. Here I met another very efficient and helpful man, Air Commodore Lukis, RAAF. He was keenly alive to the situation, approved without question the steps I had taken at Darwin, and gave me his staff operations assistant to help me on the survey I intended making at Port Moresby, Papua, and Rabaul, New Britain—bases to be included in our ferry route.

PORT MORESBY, PAPUA, *16 November 1941.* The same story repeated itself in Port Moresby. Construction was proceeding very slowly. No sense of urgency was apparent, although the rains were imminent and American bombers had been damaged landing here because of the condition of the runways.

Only one stone-crusher was available to process rock for the landing surface, and its total output was being used to improve the road between the landing field and town, some eight miles distant. Again I met a very energetic and helpful man, Squadron Leader Pearce, RAF. The Resident Commissioner at Port Moresby, who controlled all labor and who



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had the reputation locally of being a tough reactionary, proved more than helpful. When the situation was explained, he agreed to impress as much local labor as was available and to offer increased wages as an inducement to the natives, on my unsupported statement that I would be financially responsible. The labor situation in this part of the island is particularly difficult. The natives are of a very low order of intelligence and have to be procured through local chieftains. They cannot be ordered to work and there is nothing to stop them when, as frequently happens, they have had enough.

After two days at Port Moresby, during which I promised to make every effort to send additional stone-crushers, we took off for Rabaul, some 500 miles to the northeast.

In Tokyo the Japs had dropped all caution in their statements, and Premier Tojo and Foreign Minister Togo were shouting that Japan's aim was "to force Britain and the United States from East Asia." I wondered how much time we had.

RABAUL, NEW BRITAIN, *17 November 1941.* On the trip to Rabaul I took with me Brigadier Morris, local Army Commander at Port Moresby. In view of the recent rains and the unsatisfactory condition of the airdrome at Rabaul, we took just sufficient gas for the round trip. This proved too much of a load, however, because we broke through the surface on landing and came just as close as I wish to destroying the plane and everybody aboard. Thanks to Colonel Eubank's skillful piloting, no serious damage resulted, although it took three hours to extricate the plane.

The city of Rabaul is terrible. The volcano that erupted violently two months ago, killing some 2,000 people, is still active and, when the prevailing wind deposits the ashes and sulphur right square over the city, it is unbearable. The city is practically deserted, though at one time it must have been lovely. It is comparatively new, having been built almost entirely by the Germans during their occupancy prior to



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World War I. At the time of the eruption there were at least ten ships in the harbor, all of which were destroyed. Two of them rest high and dry about a quarter of a mile from the waterfront, the contour of the entire harbor having been changed by the eruption.

Enroute back to Port Moresby we passed over Lae, New Guinea, and inspected the airdrome from the air. It did not seem suitable for heavy bombers owing to the impossibility of extending the runways because of the terrain and the lack of bulldozers needed to level the ground.

Arriving back at Port Moresby at dusk, we were guests at an RAAF shindig. The evening started out very formally, but after the toasts to the King, the atmosphere changed somewhat. Gene Eubank was the star performer of the evening with his stories in Southern dialect.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, *22 November 1941.* On 18 November left for Brisbane, where we left our Fortress because of the fact that nowhere else in Australia, except at Townsville and Darwin, is there a landing field big enough to receive a B-17.

Two hours after arrival in Melbourne, I had my first conference with ACM Sir Charles Burnett, Chief of the Air Staff in Australia. I explained the purpose of my visit and was very cordially received and assured of the utmost coöperation.

A conference was held the next morning at which were present representatives of the RAAF, members of the Defense Committee, the General Staff, and the Royal Navy, and my own party. Committees were immediately appointed to furnish the information necessary, with Air Commodore Hewitt, RAAF, acting as chairman. We met morning, afternoon, and night for three days, and at the end we had produced an agreement outlining completely the projects to be undertaken and giving authority to commence the work. I have never gotten a more comprehensive task completed in such a short time. Burnett is a remarkable man and con-



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ducts a conference more efficiently and with less waste of time than most executives I have met.

The project in general dealt with three objectives. The first was the immediate establishment of airdromes for the American Ferry route across Australia to Darwin, at the departure point to the Philippines, Java, and Singapore. The heavy bombers were to come via Port Moresby to Townsville, thence directly to Darwin. In this connection, I was to undertake the survey of a new route directly from Port Moresby to Mindanao. It would save two days and three landings. Disadvantages, however, loomed in the lack of adequate weather forecasting and the extremely dangerous terrain in northwest New Guinea.

The fighter aircraft were to be unloaded at Townsville and Brisbane, and intermediate landing fields were to be prepared across the continent. The route was from Brisbane to Townsville via New Castle, thence to Darwin, with fueling stops at Cloncurry and Dale Waters. An assembly and maintenance plant was to be provided at Townsville. Additional dispersal airdromes, training centers, and a major repair depot were to be provided at Brisbane.

The second project included development of the airdromes mentioned and of such other fields as might be needed to accommodate (for tactical operations and training) an American Air Force comprising 50 percent of the strength assigned to the Far East Air Force. For a working basis this strength was assumed to be one heavy bombardment group, three fighter groups, three bomber reconnaissance squadrons, and accompanying services.

The third objective that was surveyed, but for which funds were not earmarked, was the development of training bases and additional operating bases in Australia to accommodate initially an American Air Force of approximately four bombardment groups and one bombardment training center, and four fighter groups and one fighter training center.

The estimate for the first project envisioned an expenditure of $18,000,000, and for the second $35,000,000. I obli-



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gated these funds prior to my departure, although I had no authority to do so.[5]

I knew that to prepare an estimate for the last project was going to take more time than I had. Material and labor would have to come from the States. There was a shortage of essential supplies in Australia. There was also a tendency on the part of the Australian government to ignore the project. Both Burnett and I were convinced, however, of the necessity for getting it under way, and with the help of the Prime Minister, Mr. Curtin, and the Australian Minister in Washington, Mr. R. G. Casey, we were able to force action.[6]

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, *23 and 24 November 1941.* With the finishing of our work, I declared a two-day holiday. Everyone was fagged. The crews were given passes and we spent the time sightseeing and resting. Sir Charles Burnett was very hospitable; as indeed was everyone with whom we came into contact, and Australian enthusiasm everywhere at the sight of an American aircraft was gratifying. My hardest job was to prevent publicity regarding our visit. We wore civilian clothes and no one used his military title. But we did not succeed in fooling anybody. A Tokyo broadcast reported my presence in Australia and most of the details of our business. The Japs had their agents everywhere.

MANILA, *28 November 1941.* On the return journey we spent the first night in Port Moresby, 1800 miles away, and then took off early the next morning for Clark Field, a 2100-mile hop to the north.

On reporting to General MacArthur I outlined the results of our trip. He approved them without change, and they were forwarded to Washington by radio. Washington ap-

[5] LATER: Fortunately my action was approved without question by General MacArthur, or I would have been in serious trouble.
[6] When American troops moved into Australia later, all three projects were adopted. The early work done had saved months of valuable time.



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proved them without alteration. Money was forthcoming immediately for the first two projects. Itemized expenditures and a detailed plan were requested for the third project. General MacArthur seemed greatly pleased and was kind enough to write a favorable letter to Washington.

General MacArthur informed me that I would proceed immediately to Netherlands East Indies, Malaya, Rangoon, and China for additional surveys along the same lines as those just completed. I asked for a delay of a week before my departure. I felt that tactical inspections should be made of the Air Force's units which, by now, had three weeks of intensive training. Accordingly, my plans were made to leave for Java on Monday, 8 December 1941.

During my trip to Australia, relations with Japan had become critical. The conferences in Washington hit a snag and Kurusu admitted to the press that there seemed no basis for further negotiation. Tokyo's attitude became more belligerent with Tojo demanding that the U. S. end the military encirclement of Japan, lift the economic blockade, and keep hands off the China-Japan conflict.

On 26 November, Secretary of State Hull gave Kurusu and Nomura a document setting forth the position of the U. S. Confidential information from Washington disclosed that the parleys seemed doomed to failure.

I was sufficiently impressed with the gravity of the situation to recommend to General MacArthur that I put all the Air Force immediately on a war footing. He concurred, and it was done at once. Blackouts were established at all fields and at the depot. A 24-hour alert was established for half the Bombardment Force and Fighter Force. All air troops were kept on their stations, except the 15 percent allowed away on week ends. Permission to visit Manila was kept to a minimum, and all personnel were required to hold themselves in readiness to return on three hours' notice.

MANILA, *29 November 1941.* Before leaving on the Australian trip I had directed my Chief of Staff, Francis Brady,



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and other staff personnel at headquarters of the Far East Air Force to draw up plans for the development of operating facilities in the Philippines. One of the major problems confronting us was location and dispersal of our aircraft. I anticipated that the Japanese would delay any landings until they had neutralized our Air Force, so we were much concerned over the location and the overcrowding of our planes at Clark Field.

During my absence, Colonel Brady, Col. Hal George of the Interceptor Command, and other members of my staff drew up a plan for the relocation of air units and development of airfield facilities. They were assisted by the manager of the Del Monte pineapple plantations on Mindanao, southernmost island in the Philippine Archipelago. The location of Mindanao made it most desirable for the development of airfields to care for the bulk of our heavy bombers. The soil on Mindanao lends itself to rapid development, and 1500 men prepared the first landing field for heavy bombers in two weeks. Two more landing strips were to be prepared for B-17s.

Colonel Brady submitted the plan for relocation of air units and development of airfields to General Sutherland on 15 November. My Chief of Staff reported to me that General Sutherland, after reading the plan, stated substantially as follows:

> The war plan for the Philippines does not provide for any ground forces for the defense of Mindanao. Consequently, the air force could not plan to base any aircraft in Mindanao in the event of hostilities. The air force must provide that all aircraft be operated from facilities in Cebu or islands to the north including Luzon.

Colonel Brady reported to me that, after considerable discussion with General Sutherland, authority was obtained to construct facilities at Del Monte, and to locate temporarily part of our bomber force on Mindanao in order to relieve the congestion at Clark Field. It was agreed between Colonel



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Brady and General Sutherland that the Del Monte airfield would become an auxiliary base until facilities could be completed on Luzon, Cebu, and the other islands to the north. Colonel Brady then secured authority from General Sutherland for the Fifth Air Base Unit, which was arriving in the Philippines, together with other auxiliary units at Clark Field, to move without delay to Mindanao.

Following up the orders placing the air force on a war footing, I called a meeting of all station commanders, unit commanders, and key staff officers and explained the necessity for the Far East Air Force to be on "alert." The pressing need for rushing the work on camouflage and construction of pens was stressed, and everyone was cautioned to make certain that aircraft were dispersed at all times. I told the men that everything pointed to a showdown soon.

MANILA, *30 November 1941.* Two messages from the War Department alerted us to the possibility of an attack by Japan at any hour. One from General Marshall to General MacArthur on 27 November[7] stated that negotiations with Japan appeared to be terminated and that there was only the barest possibility of reopening of the negotiations. I did not see this message, but General MacArthur told me that General Marshall directed that if trouble came the first overt act must be committed by Japan.

[7] "Negotiations with Japan appear to be terminated to all practical purposes with only barest possibilities that Japanese Government might come back and offer to continue. Japanese future action unpredictable but hostile action possible at any moment. If hostilities cannot, repeat cannot, be avoided, the U. S. desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not be construed as restricting you to a course of action that might jeopardize the successful defense of the Philippines. Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to take such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary. Report measures taken. Should hostilities occur you will carry out the tasks assigned in revised Rainbow Five which was delivered to you by General Brereton. Chief of Naval Operations concurs and request you to notify Hart."



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The other message, on 28 November, was from General Arnold to General MacArthur, and I was given a copy of it. The cable follows:

Issue following instructions to all units under your command. The present critical situation demands that all precautions be taken at once against subversive activities. Take steps to: protect your personnel against subversive propaganda, protect all activities against espionage, and protect against sabotage of your equipment, property, and establishments. This does not authorize any illegal measures. Avoid unnecessary alarm and publicity. Protective measures should be confined to those essential to security. On or before December 5 this year, reports be submitted to Chief of Army Air Forces of all steps initiated by you to comply with these instructions.

This was the day of the Army-Navy football game (there being one day's difference in time between the Philippines and U. S.), and I thought the Japs might pick this occasion to attack us, knowing as they do our custom in faraway outposts of gathering at any Army and Navy Clubs for reports of the game. We are on the alert and as ready as we'll ever be with what we've got.

MANILA, *1 December 1941.* The Navy informed General MacArthur that their Catalinas could not continue air reconnaissance north to Formosa and at the same time give adequate attention to the areas west of Luzon. As a result it was agreed that the Far East Air Force would take over reconnaissance towards Formosa, freeing the Navy patrol wing to concentrate their reconnaissance to the west to Kamranh Bay and the approaches through the southeast passage.

I requested permission to conduct high-altitude photo missions of southern Formosa, particularly in the region of Takao, a large Japanese base from which the first signs of action were anticipated. General MacArthur directed that, in view of the War Department instructions to avoid any overt act, he did not consider it advisable to conduct photo



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missions over Formosa, and that our reconnaissance in coöperation with the Navy would be limited to "two-thirds of the distance between North Luzon and Southern Formosa." Authority was later secured to extend this reconnaissance to the international treaty boundary between the Philippines and Formosa.

MANILA, *4 December 1941.* Throughout the hours of darkness for the past four nights, the Interceptor Command picked up and traced forces of strange aircraft estimated at from 9 to 27 bombers, which came from Formosa down to within 20 miles of the shores of Lingayen Gulf. There is little doubt that these formations were Japanese aircraft. Presumably, they were making trial navigation flights to familiarize themselves with the air route. Homing radio instruments could easily have been tuned in on the Manila Radio Station broadcast. On the return flight to Formosa these formations undoubtedly used their own Takao radio station.

In Washington the situation has grown uglier with the parleys floundering and Tokyo getting bolder. Tojo declared that the American and British exploitation of Asiatic people must "be purged and avenged." President Roosevelt rushed back from Warm Springs, Georgia, to handle the delicate situation.

With my Chief of Staff, Colonel Brady, and other staff members, I discussed the dispersal and employment of our aircraft. The overcrowding at Clark Field invited attack, and I directed that steps be taken immediately to move two squadrons of Flying Fortresses, 16 aircraft, and a limited number of B-18s to be used for air transportation, to Del Monte.

Approval for the movement of the 16 Flying Fortresses to Del Monte was obtained from General Sutherland only with the understanding that they would be returned to airfields to be constructed on Cebu and Luzon as soon as the necessary operating facilities could be prepared.



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Three days were required to move personnel and equipment to Del Monte. On 3 December bare necessities in the way of facilities were set up, including only one radio set capable of communications between Mindanao and Luzon.

As a result of the energetic construction program undertaken by Colonel Casey, a regrouping of the fighter forces was made possible at Iba and Del Carmen.

MANILA, *5 December 1941.* Sixteen Flying Fortresses of the 93rd and 14th Bomb Squadrons departed after dark according to plan from Clark Field for Del Monte. It was believed that the Japanese had no knowledge of Del Monte Airfield. In the event of hostilities it was planned to have them fly to Clark Field, refuel, and carry out missions from there.

Colonel Eubank, commanding the 19th Bomb Group, who was to become my Bomber Commander when reinforcements arrived, advised against moving more than two squadrons to Del Monte because another group of B-17s, the 7th Bomb Group, was to depart from the States for the Philippines the first week in December, and would push through as rapidly as possible. The ground personnel for this Group was now enroute by water. It was planned to base the 7th Group at Del Monte, where two more landing fields were to be constructed.[8]

MANILA, *6 December 1941.* As requested by General Arnold, the following cable was sent to the War Department today:

MACARTHUR TO AGWAR—*6 Dec. 1941.*

All air corps stations here on alert status. Airplanes dispersed and each under guard. All airdrome defense stations manned.

[8] LATER: The 7th Bomb Group never did arrive in the Philippines. The first squadron arrived at Honolulu the day the Japs hit Pearl Harbor, and stayed there. When the Japs took Wake Island they cut our ferry route, and another one had to be built farther south before the 7th Group could proceed farther.



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Guards on installations increased. Counter subversive activities charged air force headquarters by regulations are being organized and have started functioning in limited manner.

Accompanied by my two aides, Captain Lewellyn and Lieutenant Hampton, I flew to Cabanatuan and Clark Field for inspections and briefing of the commissioned personnel on the delicate situation, and our plans in the event of attack. I talked to Colonel Eubank at Clark Field and went over the plans for the alerting, briefing and entire procedure for a mission if hostilities broke out. There was no information as to the location of the main enemy forces, but we were certain that they must come from either the west or the north. If the west, the Navy Patrol Wing would give us the first information. If the north, our own reconnaissance planes would be the first to locate the enemy. Our photographs of Formosa were obsolete, so in view of this fact we had selected Takao Harbor as the juiciest target to bomb immediately on the outbreak of war.

Before leaving Clark Field I called on Maj. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright, commander of the North Luzon forces, made up largely of native troops plus the first Philippine Division, composed of American troops and the 26th Cavalry of Filipino Scouts.

MANILA, *7 December 1941.* We learned that President Roosevelt had made a personal appeal to Hirohito in order to avoid war.

The situation seemed hopeless.

In the evening Admiral "Speck" Parnell, whom I saw in the Manila Hotel, told me in confidence that Admiral Hart, Commander of the Asiatic Fleet, had received a warning order from the Navy Department and that Admiral Hart and General MacArthur and, I believe, Commissioner Sayre and President Quezon, were in conference. Admiral Parnell felt that it was only a question of days or perhaps hours until the shooting started. He said he was standing by for a call



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from Admiral Hart and presumed that all commanders would be briefed tomorrow morning.

Later in the evening General Sutherland told me about the same thing that Admiral Parnell had earlier. He said that in the opinion of the War and Navy departments hostilities might break out at any time.

I telephoned my staff and told them to assemble immediately. I had my Chief of Staff notify all fields and all commanders that they were to go on "combat alert"[9] as of daylight Monday morning (8 December). Extensive field exercises, involving moving B-17s temporarily from Del Monte back to Clark Field, had to be cancelled.

MANILA, *8 December 1941.* The telephone woke me up. Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell, my G-3, answered it. "What is it, Charley?" I called.

"General, Pearl Harbor's been bombed," he answered. "Sutherland is on the 'phone and wants to talk to you."

I grabbed the 'phone and talked to General Sutherland, who informed me that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor at 7:35 A.M. [7 December] Hawaiian time, which was 2:35 A.M. [8 December] Manila time, and that a state of war existed. It came as a surprise to no one.

While hastily dressing I instructed Colonel Brady, my C/S, and Colonel Caldwell to notify all air units of the Pearl Harbor attack and have them prepared for action. This was around 4 A.M. and it was still dark. I knew we could expect an attack from the Japs any time after daylight. I also told them to have Colonel Eubank at Clark Field proceed to Hq. Far East Air Force without delay.

I reported to General MacArthur's Hqs. at Fort Santiago, Manila, at about 5 A.M. He was in conference with (I believe) Admiral Hart. After General Sutherland had given me

[9] On "combat alert," the time for the bombers to be bombed up and the crews briefed and ready for takeoff was usually a little over an hour. For the fighters to be briefed, assembled, and ready for takeoff was usually a little under an hour.



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all available information I requested permission to carry out offensive action immediately after daylight. I told Sutherland I wished to mount all available B-17s at Clark Field for missions previously assigned and to prepare the B-17s at Del Monte for movement, refueling and bomb loading at Clark Field for operations against the enemy on Formosa. General Sutherland agreed with my plans and said to go ahead with preparations; in the meantime he would obtain General MacArthur's authority for the daylight attacks.

When I left General MacArthur's Hqs. I was under orders to prepare our heavy bombers for action but not to undertake any offensive action until ordered. On arrival at my Hqs. Nielson Field I informed them of the situation. (Everyone was puzzled over why we couldn't bomb Formosa since the Japs had committed the first overt act at Pearl Harbor.[10])

I told Colonel Eubank, who had flown down from Clark Field, to plan to mount an operation against targets in Takao Harbor, Formosa, first objective enemy transports and warships, and to prepare three planes for a reconnaissance of airfields on Formosa.

At about 8 A.M. Maj. David Gibbs, operations officer of the 19th Bombardment Group, senior officer at Clark Field in Colonel Eubank's absence, ordered all B-17s into the air when he received information that Jap planes were approaching. All B-17s (except one which was having generator trou-

[10] LATER: Neither General MacArthur nor General Sutherland ever told me why authority was withheld to attack Formosa after the Japs had attacked Pearl Harbor. I always have felt that General MacArthur may possibly have been under orders from Washington not to attack unless attacked. If it was a decision that had been reached in Washington that he was trying to change via radio telephone, this may explain the "strictly defensive" attitude under which we operated that fateful morning. General MacArthur's position was a peculiar one because he occupied a dual role as Marshal of the Philippine Army and commander of the U. S. forces in the Far East. Owing to the political relationship between the Philippine Commonwealth and the United States it is entirely possible that the Pearl Harbor attack might not have been construed as an overt act against the Philippines.



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ble) took off, without bombs, with orders to search the seas around Luzon until recalled through the Group radio channel.

At the same time 18 P-40s of the 20th Pursuit Squadron at Clark Field and 18 P-40s of the 18th Pursuit Squadron at Nichols Field were dispatched to attempt interception. At 9 A.M. when no word was received of any contact with the enemy, I ordered Colonel George to undertake fighter cover of Clark and Nichols fields. About 9:10 he reported that he had 54 aircraft in the air and 36 in reserve. Within 15 minutes information was received that twin-motored Jap bombers had attacked Tuguegarao, Tarlac, and Baguio on northern Luzon. The fighters were recalled for refueling.

I personally called General Sutherland and informed him that hostile aircraft were operating over Luzon and that if Clark Field was attacked successfully we would be unable to operate offensively with the bombers. I again requested authority to carry out offensive action.

Colonel Eubank left for Clark Field at 10:10 and just before he departed General Sutherland advised that General MacArthur had decided that a reconnaissance mission could be sent to Formosa. At this time the B-17s, which had been ordered to take off about 8 A.M. by Major Gibbs, were patrolling the shores off north and northeast Luzon.

At approximately 10:20 the Air Warning Service again reported a force of enemy aircraft over Lingayen Gulf headed for Clark Field and Manila. Fighters were ordered to scramble, and 18 P-40s each from the 17th Squadron at Clark Field and the 21st Squadron at Nichols Field took off to cover the Manila area. Eighteen P-40s of the 3rd Squadron from Iba took off and headed north to attempt interception. Another 18 P-35s of the 34th Squadron took off from Del Carmen to cover Clark Field. The 20th Squadron at Clark Field was kept in reserve. This enemy force did not reach the Clark Field area, or Manila. It is probable our fighter defense diverted them. Later reports showed that other targets in Luzon had been attacked, including Vigan and La Union.



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Colonel Eubank, on arrival at Clark Field, sent a coded radio message recalling the bombers. The bombers trickled back to Clark Field, refueled, and prepared to execute the orders—three planes to go on reconnaissance to Formosa and the rest to be briefed for an attack.

About 11 A.M. I received a call from General Sutherland informing me that "bombing missions" could be executed. I directed Colonel Eubank at Clark Field to load all available B-17s with 100-lb. and 300-lb. bombs and brief his crews to attack known airfields in southwest Formosa. Orders were issued for the two B-17 squadrons at Del Monte to move to San Marcelino at dusk, proceed to Clark Field during the night, and be prepared for operations at daybreak. I telephoned General Sutherland at 11:56 and gave him a complete report of the air situation, including the fact that the B-17s at Del Monte were to be moved north to take offensive action at daybreak tomorrow.

At approximately 12:13 P.M.[11] an estimated 54 Japanese bombers, flying in two waves, attacked Clark Field from high altitude. The three reconnaissance B-17s which were being taxied into position for takeoff by the crews were hit and destroyed. Three planes of the 20th Pursuit Squadron, led by Lieut. Joe Moore, were able to get off, but several other P-40s were hit and destroyed on the runway. Three other B-17s, which were being loaded with bombs, were hit and damaged.

The high altitude bombing was followed by a series of attacks by about 30 dive bombers and strafers, covered by about 40 fighters. They made several attacks on the field, bombing and strafing everything in sight.

The attack on Clark Field came without warning. At about

[11] LATER: The exact time of this attack has never been definitely established. It varies from 12:13 to 12:47. I have made a survey among personnel who were at Clark Field that day and am convinced that the exact time cannot be established. Most of the official records were burned and all diaries known to exist vary as much as 34 minutes in the time of the attack.



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10:30, the 3rd Pursuit Squadron at Iba took off to intercept a formation of Jap planes which were plotted on the radar approaching over the China Sea. The 3rd Squadron failed to intercept the Japs and were coming in to refuel when the Jap fighters attacked Iba. Approximately 16 P-40s were lost, and, in addition, the one radar air warning set in operation along with other ground installations was destroyed. Loss of the radar set proved to be fatal, permitting a following formation of bombers and fighters to get to Clark Field without warning.

Colonel Eubank, in one of his telephone reports, stated that he was actually briefing the pilots who were to go on the photo reconnaissance mission when the attack came. He reported that the attacks stopped at 1:37 P.M. Incendiary bombs and strafing did the most damage. Planes were afire all over the field, which was an inferno of fire and black smoke; even the grass was set afire. Preliminary reports gave 17 B-17s destroyed or damaged and 16 out of 21 P-40s of the 20th Pursuit Squadron destroyed. Lieut. Max Louk, who was in the fifth fighter trying to take off, was hit by an incendiary bomb on the end of the runway and destroyed with his plane. Lieutenant Drake tried to take off through the fire and smoke after the bombing was over but was caught by a strafer at the end of the runway and destroyed with his plane. The first incomplete casualty report gave 186 killed, 214 missing, and 42 wounded at all fields.

The only fighter opposition to the Jap attacks was furnished by Lieut. Joe Moore and Lieut. Randall Keator who, with Lieutenant Gilmore, got off from Clark Field while the Jap bombers were overhead. Lieutenants Moore and Keator engaged a formation of nine enemy fighters at 20,000 feet and shot down five Jap Zeros. Lieutenant Gilmore, who had engine trouble, had to land at Del Carmen. When Lieutenants Moore and Keator returned to Clark Field they were mistaken for enemy planes and shot at by our own machine guns, but were able to land.



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The Jap bombing was very accurate, with no bombs falling more than 200 feet outside of Clark Field.

All during the Clark Field attack there were 36 P-40s and 8 P-35s airborne and covering Nichols Field, Cavite, and Manila, 55 miles south of Clark Field. Efforts to get orders to this fighter force to proceed to Clark Field were unavailing because the one radio set available for fighter-ground communications had been hit in the initial attack. All during the day communications were conducted under the most difficult circumstances owing to the shortage of radio and telephone equipment. All 'phone calls were made over the Philippine Commonwealth lines except to General MacArthur's Hqs., where we had a field telephone; this line we suspected was tapped by enemy agents.

After the Clark Field attack telephone reports came in during the afternoon that the following stations had been attacked: San Fernando, La Union, Samar Island, Rosales, Vigan, and others.

A message came in from San Fernando and La Union that Jap planes had dropped leaflets to the Filipino natives, saying: "Way to permanent peace causing this conflict between Japan and U. S. Roosevelt attempting to curve [*sic*] our independence. We all know that unless the U. S. has not oppressed Japan, this war has not been started. Our mission is to end this war as far as possible and in order to achieve this end we should coöperate fully."

About 4:00 P.M. a message was received from Major O'Donnell at Del Monte refusing to move his squadrons because the order had been sent in the clear and he feared fifth columnism. A code message was sent to Del Monte directing them to land at Clark Field at daybreak. Because of difficulties and delay in encoding, transmitting, and decoding, this message was not acknowledged until after midnight. Owing to hazards of takeoff at night, departure could not be effected before daylight next day.

Colonel Eubank reported that 17 B-17s had been destroyed or put out of commission on Clark Field. (Later repair and



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salvage reduced the loss to 12 B-17s.) The only B-17 at Clark Field not hit was the aircraft flown by Lieut. John W. Carpenter III, unable to take off until after 10 o'clock because of generator trouble. Carpenter was 200 miles northeast of Clark Field when ordered by radio to return. He reported that as he came over the mountains east of Clark Field he thought he saw a thundershower over the field. The Japs were then bombing. In approaching the field to land he was bounced by 15 Jap Navy fighters and immediately withdrew to cloud cover and left the area. He returned to land when his gas gave out.

Fighter losses were approximately 45 with many others damaged. A recapitulation of the remaining air strength showed approximately 17 B-17s, 15 P-35s, and 55 P-40s left. The operations office and headquarters at Clark Field were destroyed in the first bombing attacks.

The events of the day as I have outlined them were as I saw them from my command post at Nielson Field, on the edge of Manila, 60 miles south of Clark Field. Complete records of that day will never be available. Many operations reports, orders given, and action taken were destroyed in the holocaust that hit us that day. It was a tragic timetable, one of the blackest days in U. S. military history.

MANILA, *9 December 1941.* "The first overt act" had been committed. The Japs had hit us and hurt us. In view of the heavy losses sustained by the Far East Air Force and the overwhelming power of the enemy's air force, it was impossible to schedule any combat missions except those in close support of the defense of Luzon until the bombers arrived from Del Monte.

The first heavy bomber mission from the Philippines left Del Monte at 0730 this morning. Six B-17s, led by Maj. Cecil E. Combs, loaded with twenty 100-lb. bombs, took off for Clark Field with orders to reconnoiter the Catanduanes area enroute for a possible target. No enemy activity was observed at Catanduanes, and the planes proceeded on to



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Clark Field. Immediately after landing and refueling at Clark Field they took off again and remained in the air until after dark to avoid enemy air action. It was too late in the day to attack targets on Formosa.

A second flight of seven B-17s, led by Major O'Donnell, took off from Del Monte at 1430 and landed at San Marcelino, Luzon, near Clark Field, after dark. As Lieut. E. C. Teats came in to land he was fired on by friendly troops, but no damage was done. The crews slept in their planes. There was no food available and they all bedded down hungry. Troops at San Marcelino said little or no food had been available for the past 24 hours.

Lieutenant Carpenter took off from Clark Field at 0800 for a photographic mission to Formosa, but was forced to turn back at Aparri because of generator trouble. This was the only aircraft available for reconnaissance over Formosa. Fighter reconnaissance flights of northern Luzon coastal areas revealed no signs of landings during this day. Information coming in from all sources indicated that it would not be long before the Japs began landing. Battleships, aircraft carriers, troop transports, and supporting naval vessels were reported off both east and west coasts of Luzon.

There was no despair among our forces. On the contrary, they were fighting mad. Examples of extraordinary heroism that occurred in the first blazing hours of battle are endless. Many of them never will be told; there wasn't time to record them.

War came in many strange ways. For instance, Lieut. E. R. Tash and crew took off at 9:45 yesterday morning from Del Monte for Clark Field for repairs to his Fortress. Arriving over Clark Field in the midst of the strafing attack, he was jumped by three Jap Fighters. Lieutenant Tash's crew shot down one enemy aircraft, but their B-17 was badly damaged. The plane's aileron cable control was shot away, the superchargers were riddled, and the propellers filled with bullet holes. The plane made it safely back to Del Monte with S/Sgt. Michael Bibin, a gunner, severely wounded.



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MANILA, *10 December, 1941.* We made our first attacks on the Japs today. Enemy landings were reported during the night of 9–10 December at Aparri and Vigan on the northern coast of Luzon. We bombed and strafed the Jap transports and landing barges throughout the day. Lieutenant Merrit, C.O. of the 34th Pursuit squadron, was killed when bombs from a B-17 blew up a transport he was strafing.

The Jap Air Force, which had let us have a relatively quiet day yesterday, was back in force today and strafed Del Carmen, Nichols, and Nielson fields. Lieut. Carl P. Gies, who escaped injury the first day when a bomb exploded 20 feet ahead of his P-40 as he was taking off, shot down two Japs. Cavite was bombed and nearly 500 killed. Pilots who had never been checked out in P-40s took off in them to get a crack at the Japs.

The Jap landings on northern Luzon were designed to obtain airfields at Aparri and Vigan. The Vigan force started landing operations at 0530, and late the same afternoon the enemy had aircraft operating from the Vigan airdrome. Loss of the Vigan and Aparri airfields was a severe blow to us because it provided the enemy close air support to cover further amphibious operations. The range of his aircraft was increased enormously by being able to operate from land bases on Luzon and his carriers could support landing forces in other areas.

The story of the 19th Bomb Group's attempts to stop the Jap landings is partly told in the day's report in the Operations Journal:

Lieut. Bohnaker and Crew were relieved by Lieut. Young and Crew.

At 0600 five (5) planes under command of Major Combs with following pilots and regular crews: Combs, Vandevanter, Ford, Shedd, and Young (replacing Bohnaker), took off Clark Field, all planes loaded with 20 100-lb. demo. bombs to bomb enemy. Transports reported in Vigan in Lingayen Gulf. Initial attack made at 12,000 ft. with all but one plane (Lieutenant Vandevanter) dropping bombs. Another attack was made from West



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East 500 ft. higher. Several transports were hit, and one be-
ɜved sunk. Lieutenant Vandevanter made two attacks at 10,000
. and 7,000 ft. Heavy antiaircraft fire was encountered, only
ımage resulting in small fragment through wing of Lieutenant
andevanter's plane. No enemy pursuit was observed and planes
ɜturned individually to Clark Field in cloud cover. Lieutenant
hedd's plane was reloaded with bombs. Other planes ordered
nto air immediately because of danger of attack on Clark Field.
Received instructions in air to proceed to Del Monte, after mes-
age received that Del Monte might be in enemy's possession. Due
to shortage of gas Major Combs and Lieutenant Ford landed at
San José, Mindoro, and Lieutenant Vandevanter landed at Tac-
loban, Leyte, to service.

Captain Parsel and crew took off San Marcelino at 0600 and proceeded to Clark Field, landing there for repairs and bombs. With only seven (7) 300-lbs. bombs, he again took off at 0940 because of reported raid on Clark Field due at 0945 and proceeded to Vigan where he bombed an enemy cruiser. First attack made at 12,500 ft. in SE to NW direction, the first of a string of four (4) bombs being estimated as 50 ft. short of target. Second attack from S to N made on a transport close to shore, three (3) bombs being dropped. Direct hit assumed as transport was observed burning after attack. Considerable antiaircraft behind and below, but no damage to plane.

Lieutenant Connally departed Clark Field at 0530 on reconnaissance mission towards Formosa. Large formation of enemy pursuit was sighted, and returned to Clark Field but could not land because of attack by same pursuit. Landed after dark.

Lieutenant Pease took off Clark Field 1400 in Lieutenant Young's airplane with 19 100-lb. bombs to bomb enemy shipping at Aparri. Two runs were made at 24,000 ft. on a cruiser and two runs on a transport. Bombs hit close to cruiser but no direct hits observed. No antiaircraft or enemy pursuit was observed. Returned Clark Field to service gas and took off for Del Monte at 1830, but returned to Clark Field because of bad weather.

With instructions to remaining planes at San Marcelino to follow at daylight, Major O'Donnell and crew took off San Marcelino at dawn for Clark Field. Captain Kelly, Lieutenant Montgomery, Lieutenant Schaetzel, Lieutenant Godman, Lieutenant



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Teats, and Lieutenant Keiser took off San Marcelino at 0630 for Clark Field. Kelly, Montgomery, and Schaetzel landed at Clark Field at 0730 to service and load bombs, the others being ordered to remain in the air. Major O'Donnell took off Clark Field when loaded with eight (8) 600-lb. bombs, proceeding to Vigan, where several runs were made at 25,000 ft. on an enemy aircraft carrier. No hits observed. Antiaircraft fire and enemy pursuit seen but no attack made. Returned to Clark Field, taking off again for Del Monte. Attacked by enemy pursuit in vicinity of Nichols Field, Manila, two of which were believed shot down. Landed Del Monte after dark with no damage to personnel or plane.

Captain Kelly and Lieutenant Schaetzel took off individually from Clark Field 0930 to bomb enemy shipping at Aparri. Captain Kelly's plane loaded with 3 600-lb. bombs, and Lieutenant Schaetzel's with 8 600-lb. bombs. Captain Kelly bombed an enemy battleship, getting one direct hit and two very near misses.[12] While returning to Clark Field six (6) enemy pursuit were observed, two (2) of which attacked. A fire was started in the bomb bay and S/Sgt. Delehanty—engineer gunner—was killed by enemy gunfire. The crew bailed out and was strafed in air by enemy pursuit. Captain Kelly's parachute failed to open, reason unknown. Pfc. Altman suffered scalp wound, believed from metal splinter in plane, and Lieutenant Bean had slight wound on ankle, possibly from strafing fire while parachuting Attack on plane made at approx. 12,000 ft. near Mt. Arayat about 1400. No bomb-bay tank was carried.

Lieutenant Schaetzel bombed transports at Aparri under cloud cover from 25,000, one believed hit, as heavy smoke was seen. While making attack on cruiser he was attacked by enemy pursuit, one of which was believed shot down. Considerable damage was done to airplane but no casualties. Returned to San Marce-

[12] LATER: The battleship attacked by Captain Kelly was the 21,000-ton *Haruna*. It was erroneously reported as having been sunk; how this report got out I have never been able to ascertain. Colonel Eubank, commander of the 19th Bomb Group, did not claim the *Haruna* as having been sunk and was never able to learn how the story originated. The reason Captain Kelly took off with only three bombs when he could have carried five more was that an air raid alert sounded and Colonel Eubank ordered his ship into the air.



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lino, landing there at 1430, where orders were received for all planes to return to Del Monte. Due to poor servicing facilities unable to take off until 2300. Landed at Cebu because of false report that Del Monte was in enemy's possession.

Lieutenant Montgomery took off Clark Field at 0930 with only one (1) 600-lb. bomb because of air raid alarm, dropping this bomb on enemy shipping at Vigan with no results. He returned to Clark Field and loaded twenty (20) 100-lb. bombs, taking off at 1400 to bomb enemy shipping at Aparri. One transport was observed burning and sinking as result of this attack. No pursuit was sighted on this mission. On return to Clark Field instructions were received not to land there but to proceed to Del Monte. Lieutenant Montgomery could not locate the field at Del Monte after dark due to very bad weather and attempted to reach Zamboanga. He was forced to land in water there out of gas about 2200. Only minor injuries were sustained by the crew, which reached shore safely about 0200 that night. Due to heavy rain and poor visibility the plane was landed at fairly high speed and sank almost immediately, approximately 4 miles off shore.

Lieutenants Godman, Teats, and Keiser after takeoff at San Marcelino were instructed not to land at Clark Field. They remained in the air until low fuel supply necessitated return to San Marcelino at 1100. Lieutenant Godman's airplane was grounded by engine trouble. Lacking further orders Captain Parsel and Lieutenants Teats and Keiser serviced and loaded six (6) 500-lb. demo. bombs in preparation for a mission to bomb enemy aircraft carrier in Lingayen Gulf. Orders to return to Del Monte were received prior to takeoff, and these three planes departed San Marcelino at 1530 for Del Monte, landing there after dark with very bad weather closing down on Field. Lieutenant Godman repaired engine and left San Marcelino with Lieutenant Schaetzel at 2300, landing Del Monte about 0900 December 11."

* * * *

Communication facilities were hopelessly inadequate and all sorts of rumors and reports came to my command post. Some of them could not be ignored. One rumor was that the enemy was making parachute landings on Luzon. I issued



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orders that every available man be armed and placed in readiness to combat any attempted parachute attack on or near the airfields.

MANILA, *11 December 1941*. Telephone communications were excellent to the United States. I had just returned from Clark Field when a long-distance call came from General Arnold in Washington. He was excited and apparently under a great strain.[13]

"How in the hell could an experienced airman like you get caught with your planes on the ground?" General Arnold asked. "That's what we sent you there for, to avoid just what happened."

I tried to explain what had happened, but halfway through the conversation the Japs came over strafing the field.

"What in the hell is going on there?" General Arnold shouted.

"We are having visitors," I replied.

I asked General Arnold to withhold his judgment until he got a complete report on what happened at Clark Field, and said that we had done everything in our power to get authority to attack Formosa on 8 December but had been relegated to a "strictly defensive attitude" by higher authority. As I hung up I looked out the window and saw my Douglas plane on fire.

I immediately reported the conversation to General MacArthur and asked his assistance in setting the facts straight. He was furious; it is the only time in my life I have ever seen him mad. He told me to go back and fight the war and not to worry. As I walked out of his office he asked Sutherland to get General Marshall on the 'phone.

Weather, fatigue, badly needed repairs and widely dispersed aircraft seriously curtailed our operations. Airmen

[13] Several times since, I have talked to General Arnold about this conversation. It has always been my impression that erroneous reports had upset him and, lacking authentic information, he had been unable to justify the losses to himself or his superiors.



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were flying day and night, and maintenance men were working around the clock. Colonel Eubank began assembling at Del Monte for reorganization all B-17s from Tacloban, Leyte, San José, Mindoro, Cebu, and Clark Field. Prior to taking off from Cebu, Lieutenant Schaetzel discovered that his aileron control cable was holding by only one strand, having been shot through the previous day. Other planes were badly in need of repairs. Japs were reported massing for a landing in Lingayen Gulf and we wanted every plane ready for attack.

A-3 reported the status of aircraft at 5:30 P.M. as follows:

Del Monte—Seven Fortresses in commission, five others suitable for low altitude missions, and four unsuitable for tactical missions. Total, 16.

Clark Field and Nichols Field—22 P-40s in commission, with six more, three at each field, available tomorrow, plus five P-35s.

That's all we had left to stop the Japs with.

MANILA, *12 December 1941*. Japanese espionage was a constant thorn in our side. They had agents everywhere. Army G-2 knew that our telephone lines were tapped. We tried to fool them with doubletalk and slang. On the second night that Nichols Field was bombed we found fires and flares marking the field. Philippine Scouts found pro-Jap Filipinos lighting one of these flares. Also, northwest of Clark Field signal fires were lighted at night marking the direction of the field. I never went from my billet to General MacArthur's headquarters or to my headquarters by the same route. My car was fired on at least twice during this period, going to or from General MacArthur's headquarters for the evening conference.

The enemy continued to attack our airfields and concentrate on liquidating our air force. Although they had landed in the northern part of Luzon, their main effort was yet to come. Their strategy plainly called for them not to commit themselves until they had achieved air supremacy. We con-



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tinued to reconnoiter the approaches to the Islands and today's effort gave special attention to the Subic Bay area where five battleships and ten destroyers had been reported.

Lieut. Boyd D. ("Buzz") Wagner on reconnaissance to Aparri destroyed two fixed-landing-gear Jap fighters in the air and got another five strafing the nearby airfield the enemy is operating from.

The Japs attacked Clark Field again but their aim wasn't as good as the first day. Propaganda leaflets were dropped to to the Filipinos telling them to beware of the Americans. The daily air attacks forced me to shift my command post to Fort McKinley where there were underground installations.

The Jap pilots were good. I understood most of them were Navy fliers, who were much superior to the Army pilots. The first attacks in the Philippines were well conceived and carried out.

MANILA, *13 December 1941.* Good news arrived from Washington today in the form of a radiogram from General Arnold. It read:

FOR BRERETON. THE EYES OF THE ENTIRE WORLD FRIEND AND ENEMY ARE FOCUSED IN ADMIRATION UPON THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE AMERICAN AIR FORCES IN THE PHILIPPINES. THE FIGHTING SPIRIT BEING DISPLAYED BY YOU HAS BROUGHT AMERICA TO ITS FEET AS ONE MAN. YOUR HEROIC SUCCESS AGAINST SUCH EXTREME ODDS AND DISCOURAGEMENT HAS SET THE PACE THAT WILL CARRY THIS NATION FORWARD TO VICTORY. WE CONTINUE TO DEPEND UPON YOU. KEEP YOUR HEADS HIGH AND YOUR CHINS UP. YOUR COUNTRY WILL NOT FAIL YOU. FROM ARNOLD SIGNED ADAMS.[14]

I had this communication published as General Orders Number 10 of the Far East Air Force and sent down to every man in the command, adding my own admiration and appreciation to that of General Arnold.

[14] Maj. Gen. Emory S. Adams, Adjutant General, who signs all official War Department communications.



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It did not take long to realize that we could not operate indefinitely from the very few bases which had been provided for heavy bombers prior to the war. It was a question of delaying the main landings of the Japs as long as possible. When it is considered that in the first three days approximately 50 percent of the fighter strength was destroyed and 50 percent of the bomber strength destroyed or damaged, the accomplishments of the Far East Air Force are incredible.

* * * *

From the time it became evident that the remnants of the Air Force and Admiral Hart's small submarine force could not prevent enemy landings, preparations had been made for withdrawal of the ground forces to the Bataan Peninsula.

On 13 December an enemy landing in force started in the Legaspi area. This landing met little opposition. General MacArthur correctly decided that this was not the main attack and refused to divert the bulk of his forces from covering positions occupied in anticipation of the landing in Lingayen Gulf.

Jap bombers in formations of 27, escorted by fighters, were going and coming over Luzon all day. Personnel at Clark Field was reduced to two meals a day.

MANILA, *14 December 1941*. Divine Services were held at Clark Field for those killed the first week.

Del Monte, the remaining bomber airfield from which operations were being conducted, was reconnoitered by the enemy today. This was the culmination of an intensive reconnaissance of the whole of the Philippines by strong Japanese air formations. It was evident that the location of the Del Monte airfield had been unknown, and it was equally evident that the Japs were determined to find our heavy bombers' base and knock it out as quickly as possible in order to proceed with the main landings.

On this date the Legaspi landings drew the attention of



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our remaining Fortresses. Six B-17s were readied for takeoff. Here's what the Operations Journal said about the mission:

First Lieuts. Jim T. Connally, W. R. Ford, E. Vandevanter, Lee Coates, Hewitt Wheless, and Jack Adams, with their regular crews, were scheduled to take off at 11:40 on bombing mission to Legaspi. Due to a tire blowout, Lieutenant Connally was unable to take off. Lieutenant Coates and Lieutenant Ford returned to Del Monte because of engine trouble. Lieutenant Wheless[15] was unable to find the formation due to poor visibility and bad weather in the vicinity of the field. He attacked enemy transports at Legaspi from 9500 feet with the results of the bombing unknown. While on the bombing run he was attacked by 18 enemy pursuit. Pfc. Killin was killed, and Sgt. Brown and Cpl. Williams were wounded by enemy gunfire. The plane was completely riddled by gunfire and a crash landing was made on a barricaded field near Cagayen, where wounded members were hospitalized. Four enemy pursuit planes were believed shot down. Both "O" and "Me" type pursuit seen.

Lieutenant Adams and Lieutenant Vandevanter, with Burke replacing Lieutenant Miller on Vandevanter's crew, attacked transports in the same area from 21,000 feet. Lieutenant Adams[15] dropped all bombs and started on return to Del Monte when attacked by six enemy pursuits. With two engines out of commission by gunfire he was forced to make a crash landing at Masbate. The plane was destroyed by enemy strafing fire after landing but no casualties were reported. Results of bombing unknown.

Lieutenant Vandevanter, with eight 600-lb. bombs, made three runs at 21,000 feet on two destroyers and a transport. One bomb hit very close to transport with resultant damage unknown. Antiaircraft fire was encountered with no resultant damage to plane. Enemy pursuits were sighted but no attack was made.

[15] LATER: Lieutenants Wheless and Adams received the Distinguished Service Cross for these attacks. Lieutenant Wheless, who hails from Fresno, California, became famous in the newspapers as "Shorty" Wheless, and President Roosevelt told the story of this raid in one of his radio speeches.



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These dry, matter-of-fact military reports do not begin to tell of the valor of the men. It was reported to me by those who saw Lieutenant Wheless's plane afterwards that it was riddled by 1000 to 1500 bullet holes. His feat was remarkable: making a belly-landing with a planeload of wounded men in darkness and in strange territory dotted with dangerous barricades erected to prevent Jap landings. Our little air force was making the Japs pay, but it was only a question of days.

MANILA, *15 December 1941.* Weather grounded our B-17s, and the day was devoted to much-needed maintenance on all our heavies. I decided to request authority to move the remainder of the bombers to Darwin in northwest Australia with the intention of operating from the two fields there, using Del Monte and Clark Field for advance bases.

We had been dodging back and forth between Del Monte and Clark Field, trying to keep up maintenance and to carry out operations. Some days it was necessary to keep the bombers in the air all during the daylight hours in order to avoid their destruction on the ground by the Japs. It was a game of hide-and-seek that wore out men as well as planes. No one who was not present can realize the difficulty in completing the repair work. It must be remembered that there was not a single spare part, engine, or propeller in the Philippines. The only tools available for such work were those in the possession of the crew and the officers, or those which could be adapted from the old B-18s. And on some days the men had to work all night on maintenance and would get no rest because air raids kept them alerted nearly all day.

General Sutherland approved the plan to move the bombers to Darwin, not as a withdrawal of forces but to facilitate maintenance in order that the remaining planes might be used to the best advantage. General MacArthur concurred immediately.



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MANILA, *16 December 1941.* Lieutenants Wagner, Strauss, and Church went to Vigan with bombs under the wings of their P-40s. Lieutenant Church's plane caught on fire but he dropped his bombs on the target and was killed.

Our Air Force was gradually fading away, and I had to issue orders to the 24th Pursuit Group to execute only missions directed by Air Force Headquarters, except in emergency This was necessary because the pilots were so eager that they'd go out looking for Japs. We had to save our strength for the main landings.

Pilots without planes are the most useless people in the world. We had a group of them. They constituted the 27th Bomb Group, a dive bomb outfit which arrived in late November on the *President Coolidge.* Their planes, A-24 dive bombers, were to have arrived the first week in December, but they never got to the Philippines.[16]

There were many good pilots in the 27th Group—Major Davies, Capt. Bill Hipps, Capt. Ed Backus, Capt. Harry L. Galusha, Lieut. Gus Heiss, Lieut. Tom Gerrity, Lieut. Herman Lowery, Lieut. Pete Bender, Lieut. James B. McAfee, and Lieut. William E. Eubank, Jr., to mention a few. It broke their hearts to stay on the ground. They were assigned to all sorts of jobs, some ferrying personnel in B-18s and others doing various jobs around the airfields. As the situation deteriorated I instructed Major Davies, the 27th C.O., to form his Group into platoons and give them actual firing practice with either pistol or rifle and train as infantrymen for any emergency. It even hurt me to do this to these eager young pilots, who kept asking anyone who'd listen, "Where the hell are our airplanes?"

I used to see some of the 27th gang or hear from them oc-

[16] LATER: The transport *Meggs* with the 52 A-24s never arrived in the Philippines. The *Meggs* reached Honolulu 11 November and remained there until 24 November waiting for Naval escort. Those 13 days of delay were decisive, and but for them the A-24s would have arrived in the Philippines. They would have proved useful weapons against the Jap invasion.



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casionally. One day Lieut. Pete Bender told me what it was like at Clark Field:

We were pretty bewildered most of the time because we wanted to fly, and we got madder and madder the more the Japs raided Clark Field, which was often. After the first attack, living conditions were pretty bad. We lived in nipa shacks [made out of reeds] or in rifle butts. We didn't have any tents. These places were something like dugouts, and we did all our cooking, sleeping, and everything there. No one ever took a bath. I don't think any of us changed clothes during the first week. Everything was filthy. Everything was covered with dust, and the filth hurt our morale worse than the Japs did. We mainly ate canned tomatoes, canned salmon, and rice. Every time the Japs would come over they'd hit the nipa huts and start fires. It was pretty grim.

That's what we were up against, and there wasn't much we could do about it. It was a shame that 27th Group didn't have planes to fly. I had seen them in training at Savannah, Georgia, before I came out, and I knew then that they'd make a good outfit.

MANILA, *17 December 1941.* With our first flight of heavies taking off for Australia today and the enemy's agents infiltrated everywhere, it was necessary again to tighten security. I briefed my staff on the Allied Strategic plan and the importance of the Philippines in it. I also gave them General MacArthur's estimate of the situation and the President's reply to the Army Commander's estimate. Construction of 10 to 15 new airfields was rushed. The Air Force staff was reorganized with Colonel Caldwell, A-1; Major Vance, A-2; Colonel Eubank, A-3; and Colonel George, A-4.

MANILA, *18 December 1941.* America's first ace of World War II was made today—Lieut. Buzz Wagner,[17] C.O. of the

[17] LATER: Lieutenant Wagner received the Distinguished Service Cross for his single-handed attack on the Vigan Landing Field,



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17th Pursuit Squadron, from Johnstown, Pa. It took him only 10 days to bring down his first five Japs. He shot up many more on the ground. In an attack on Vigan today he blasted out a nest of Japs at Vigan, shooting down several and destroying others on the ground. Flying a P-40, Wagner showed the fast Jap Zeros something. Many pilots said Wagner was the best natural flyer they had ever seen. But American airmen by no means had a monopoly on skill and courage; reports came to me of the utter recklessness of the Filipino pilots in their attack against Japs.

Capt. Jesus A. Villamor[18] was the most daring of the Filipino pilots. In the face of superior forces, Captain Villamor led a flight of three planes against the enemy on 10 December, preventing them from attacking Zablan Field. Two days later he led a flight of six planes against 45 Jap planes and destroyed one enemy aircraft and drove off the others. The Filipinos flew obsolete P-26s with nonretractable undercarriage, and P-35s.

A fighter pilot who examined a wrecked Jap Navy fighter reported that it was equipped with American parts: Hamilton propeller, Eclipse generator, S.A.E. bolts, and American pitot tube.

MANILA, *21 December 1941.* Movement of the remaining B-17s to Batchelor Field, Australia, was completed on 20 December. Fourteen Fortresses were left from our original 35. The status report on 21 December showed 10 planes in commission, two out of commission, and two in need of depot overhaul. The pilots who flew the planes south were Major Cecil E. Combs, Capt. E. L. Parsel, and Lieutenants Tash,

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and quickly rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, only to lose his life on a routine training flight from Eglin Field, Florida, to Maxwell Field, Alabama, 28 November 1942.

[18] LATER: Captain Villamor was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Oak Leaf Cluster for his conspicuous example of courage and leadership in attacks against the Japs.



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Ford, Coates, Wheless, Walsh, Mueller, Godman, Teats, Smith, Connally, Schaetzel, and Keiser.

It didn't take the Japs long to find out about the withdrawal of the bombers. On the night of 20–21 December their advance elements steamed into Lingayen Bay.

Lieut. Walter Coss, 20th Pursuit pilot, who was shot down over a week ago, got back to Clark Field after walking 7 days. He was shot down south of Aparri after bailing out at 800 feet. He landed in a river and was machine-gunned seven times. He swam through the crocodile-infested water for 20 minutes and then met a native guide who helped him escape.

MANILA, *22 December 1941.* The first mission from Australia was directed against Davao, where the Japs had landed in considerable numbers on 19 December. Nine B-17s, led by Major Combs, carrying four 500-lb. bombs each, flew the approximately 1500 miles to Davao, bombing seven transports in the harbor at sundown. The planes proceeded on to Del Monte and landed after dark.

The main Jap force, estimated at 80,000 troops on approximately 150 transports, protected by a large naval force and with a top-cover of fighters, forced a landing at Santo Tomas in Lingayen Gulf, about 100 miles northwest of Manila.

The Navy, operating with patrol reconnaissance planes, submarines, PT boats and light covering forces, did a magnificent job in harassing and delaying the Japs. The combined efforts of the Navy and the remnants of the Air Force had delayed the main Jap landings possibly two weeks, and enabled General MacArthur to spot his ammunition and supplies for a slow withdrawal according to the master plan.

It was reported to me that some of the Fighter Pilots are fuming mad about all the prominence given Hawaii on the radio while little mention is made of the Philippines, even though the Japs have landed here.

MANILA, *23 December 1941.* The 24th Pursuit Group couldn't carry on much longer without reinforcements. Its



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strength had been reduced to 12 P-40s and 6 P-35s. In addition, the casualties had been heavy, including 17 killed and 16 wounded in the past few days. Among the casualties was Lieut. "Buzz" Wagner, who was almost blinded when a shell exploded in his windshield while he was on a recent reconnaissance mission.

The situation was gloomy, but nobody had given up hope that we would get reinforcements and additional planes to rebuild our air strength. Our plans were based on fighting a delaying action over an extended period. Our presence in the Philippines left the enemy's flank exposed and endangered his lines of communication to the south.

In line with this plan orders were issued to G-4 (Supply), and the Service Command to begin work immediately for the evacuation of the air force to the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor. Orders also were given to General MacArthur's engineer, Colonel Casey, to exhaust all resources to develop new airfields south of Manila.

We continued to put up every flyable airplane against the Japs. Four B-17s were dispatched from Del Monte and dropped their 300-lb. bombs on shipping in Lingayen Gulf. Antiaircraft fire and enemy fighters were encountered, but the ack ack never came close, and the fighters, climbing to attack, were outrun by the flight.

On return flight from Del Monte to Batchelor another Fortress, piloted by Lieutenant Godman, bombed the Davao docks at dawn. A large fire was seen burning in Davao Harbor, presumably from the previous night's attack.

MANILA, *24 December 1941.* The Japanese movement to the south from Lingayen Gulf, and the rapid advance of mechanized forces which had landed on the east coast of Luzon, had forced General MacArthur's army back to the second delaying position, which ran generally east and west south of San Marcelino.

The fall of Manila was a question of days, and on Christ-



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mas Eve General MacArthur sent to the press his proclamation constituting Manila an open city. It was promptly repudiated by the Japanese commander in Luzon. While intensive bombing had done considerable damage to the city, the major part of the havoc was confined to the harbor area and to the outskirts in the vicinity of Nichols Field.

This Christmas would not be any holiday for the combat crews or ground men. The only three B-17s in commission and not on a mission were ordered to fly from Darwin to Del Monte on Christmas Eve for refueling, bombing up, and further orders.[19]

On the afternoon of Christmas Eve I was called by General MacArthur for a conference. He expressed his extreme grati-

[19] LATER: Word came to me in Java of how the crews of these three Fortresses spent Christmas Day. The planes, piloted by Lieuts. W. H. Smith, George E. Schaetzel, and Alvin J. Mueller, were gassed and bombed up at Del Monte for a 4:30 A.M. takeoff. Lieutenant Smith's plane blew a tire taxiing out for the takeoff, but the other two got off and bombed the airfield at Davao. An undetermined number of fighters, including Zeros, jumped the two B-17s and raked them with fire for about 20 minutes. The Forts climbed 28,000 feet altitude. However, one engine had been shot out on Lieutenant Schaetzel's plane, and Lieutenant Mueller's plane had been hit twice by antiaircraft fire at lower altitudes, as well as by fighters. S/Sgt. James Cannon, gunner on Lieutenant Schaetzel's plane, was killed and buried in Darwin the next day. Two crew members, Cpl. Harvey and Pvt. Olsen, were wounded on Lieutenant Mueller's ship, but remained at their posts. Both planes were so badly shot up that they required a major depot overhaul before being fit to fly again.

In daylight and under enemy attack, Lieutenant Smith and his crew (Lieutenants Friedman and Hayman, Sgt. Jones, T/Sgt. Brandes, Pfc. Schaffner, Pfc. Burke, and Pfc. Park) replaced the wheel and tire on his plane and took off six hours later. They flew to Davao Harbor and from 22,000 feet bracketed one of four boats in the harbor with seven 300-lb. bombs. All three crews brought their planes back to Batchelor Field after a flight of 1100 miles of open water. All crew members were cited for bravery under fire. What a hell of a way to spend Christmas!



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fication over the part the Far East Air Force had taken in the battle of Luzon and told me that I was being ordered to proceed south with my Headquarters. I asked to remain on his staff in any capacity in which he could use me.

"No, Lewis," he said. "You go on south. You can do me more good with the bombers you have left and those you should be receiving soon than you can here. Since communications over that distance are practically impossible now, I must depend to the greatest extent upon your own initiative to support our forces here."

I rose and prepared to leave, and General MacArthur said, "I hope that you will tell the people outside what we have done and protect my reputation as a fighter."

As I shook hands with him I said, "General, your reputation will never need any protection."

Those were the last words I had with him.

My orders follow:

December 24, 1941.

SUBJECT: Instructions.

TO: Commanding General, Far East Air Force, San Pedro, Makati, Rizal, P. I.

1. You will proceed to the south with your Headquarters, Far East Air Force. Your mission is to organize advanced operating bases from which, with the Far East Air Force, you can protect the lines of communications, secure bases in Mindanao, and support the defense of the Philippines by the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East. You will coöperate with the U.S. Navy and with the air and naval forces of Australia and the Netherlands Indies.

2. You will establish liaison with the Commanding General, U.S. Forces in Australia. He is charged with the organization of bases in Australia. You will direct the operation of the Far East Air Force from those bases and the disposition of Air Corps troops in advance thereof in order to accomplish your assigned mission. You will make request upon the Commanding General, U.S. Forces in Australia, for such movement and disposition of the ground elements of your command as may be required in the execution of your mission.



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3. The Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces in Australia, is being furnished with a copy of this directive.

By Command of General MacArthur:

R. K. Sutherland (Signed)
R. K. SUTHERLAND
Major General, U.S. Army
Chief of Staff.

I closed my headquarters at Ft. McKinley at 4:00 P.M., 24 December and instructed the commanding officer at Darwin by radio that headquarters was transferred as of that time and date. All our bombers had left the Philippines, and my only means of going south was either by the single unarmed transport plane, or by Catalina flying boat. The transport needed 48 hours' maintenance. The Navy's Catalina was due to leave that night, and I decided to take it. Colonel Brady, Colonel Eubank, and my senior aide, Captain Lewellyn, were to go with me.

We had only two hours to pack. The two hours were used by the Japs for a concentrated air attack on the harbor area near our quarters. For the first time, however, no one seemed to mind particularly, except the servants, who promptly cleared out. The house was hit twice and my automobile was damaged by a shell fragment.

We arrived at the Cavite Naval Station, or what was left of it, at dusk and taxied out at last light in the Catalina. On the takeoff we hit a native fishing boat, damaging a wing float and wing, and necessitating our return to the landing ramp. After a long delay, we were told that another Catalina was available at the Naval Air Station on Laguna de Baie, a large inland lake south of Manila.

Driving 50 miles to our new destination in complete blackout, except for a quarter moon, was hazardous and exciting. Once our car was sideswiped by a speeding truck. After a half-hour spent in tearing off a damaged fender, we continued. More time was lost by halts for identification with Philippine Army patrols. We became concerned about the lateness of the hour. The moon was well down in the west



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and we needed its light to take off. The waters of Laguna were filled with sunken stumps and debris, making an attempt to take off in darkness risky.

Arriving at Laguna de Baie, we were received cordially and after a welcome drink of coffee took the trail down to the edge of the lake. While I thought my baggage requirements were very modest, consisting of one bag, when I left Manila I was sorely tempted to discard everything. Walking through the rice fields and buffalo wallows in the dark for a distance of three miles almost made me regret leaving Manila. If the journey was bad for me, it was torture for Colonel Eubank, who had two sprained ankles, a broken wrist, and a cut on his head—injuries received when an automobile had run into him during a blackout about a week previous.

Finally our plane was found, pushed into the swamp bank of the lake and excellently camouflaged. The takeoff was uneventful, but daylight surprised us too close for comfort to Mindanao, where strong Jap air forces lurked. However, the cloud cover was excellent, a solid overcast. Realizing the futility of worry, and worn out, everyone slept except the gunners and crew. Later in the morning I learned that a hostile aircraft had been sighted, but nothing further disturbed the trip.

The ultimate collapse of resistance in the Philippines, which was due primarily to the loss of airpower, can best be explained by stating two basic principles of war, violation of which throughout history has invariably caused disaster. They are:

(1) Failure to provide security.

(2) Failure to provide mobility.

Security was violated by not providing adequate defensive measures for protecting the air striking force; for the protection of the ground forces and maintenance crews; and for the protection of the installations essential to the air defense of Luzon. On 8 December we had only one radar set working on Luzon, and it was destroyed in the first air attack. Our



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communications and air warning service, totally inadequate at best, were unable to function in the critical first few days.

Failure to provide mobility resulted from the early planning which had not foreseen heavy bombers in the organization of the Philippine Air Force. Thus, only two fields suitable for heavy bomber bases were available, at Clark Field and the one hastily constructed at Del Monte.

From the moment it was decided to place heavy bombers in the Philippines, every effort was made to provide additional bases. Peacetime procedure required that a project be submitted to the War Department for approval. This project had been submitted months before. Had it been pushed with energy in Washington, it would have gone a long way towards giving us the necessary bases from which to operate a heavy bomber force and would have eliminated the hazards resulting from keeping our bombers on Clark Field, well within the enemy's range and where every movement of our aircraft was reported by the ever-present Jap espionage system.

Owing to the peculiar status of the Philippine Commonwealth in relation to our National Defense, the air expansion program required the appropriation of additional funds from Congress. Even had funds been available by 1 July 1941, months of work would have been necessary to create the installations necessary. The approval of the Philippine Commonwealth was necessary. Additional land had to be procured by cumbersome negotiations through Government agencies. The contracts for construction had to be decided by competitive bidding. There was a vital shortage of engineering talent and construction machinery. Many of the able engineers and contractors available had been preëmpted by the Navy Department, whose aggressive policy had allowed them to start extensive construction on Philippine bases. Further, the attitude of Congress was distinctly unfavorable to the grant of any considerable funds to be expended in the Philippines, or indeed for any projects farther to the Far East than the Hawaiian Islands.



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Prior to declaration of war, preparation of air bases in the Philippines other than those in existence was a slow and unsatisfactory process. As late as mid-November, funds requested earlier for airfield construction and for the modernization and enlargement of the Philippine Air Depot had not been received. To the best of my knowledge, there was available less than $250,000 for this purpose at the time of my arrival, all of which had been obligated for purposes connected with upkeep and maintenance and none of which was for new construction of any kind.

Comparatively large sums of money, by peacetime standards, had been placed at the disposal of the Philippine Commonwealth for defense purposes. General MacArthur, who for six years had been acting as Military Advisor to the Philippine Government, had directed the disbursement of such funds for the enlargement and modernization of the Philippine Army. The fact that the Philippine Army had taken definite form and that there had been placed in service a number of completed, well-trained, and well-equipped divisions, is the highest possible tribute to General MacArthur and his staff. The limitation of funds, the necessity for developing maximum manpower quickly, and the comparatively high cost of organizing and training even a minimum air force put the creation of air units in the second priority. Training cadres had been established for the Philippine Air Force, schools created, and a program set up which eventually would have provided a Philippine Air Force proportionate to the size of the ground force. However, the equipment provided for the purpose was obsolete, and it was almost impossible to obtain modern replacements owing to the expansion of the air forces at home, plus commitments to England and Russia.

The lessons of the war in Europe were ignored in placing a heavy bomber force in the Philippines without adequate protection. Our aim in sending the heavy bombers to the Far East was to create a potential threat to Japanese aggres-



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sion and cause a hoped-for delay in the Japanese advance to the south.

Before my departure from the United States I protested against the danger of exposing a force of heavy bombers to Japanese attack prior to sending out adequate defensive fighter aircraft, air warning services, and all other means of local defense against air attack. General MacArthur was in accord with my ideas and had indicated to the War Department that a minimum of four fighter groups was required for proper defense, based on a strength of two heavy bomber groups and one light bomber group.

It seems that failure to do this was a result of proportionate failure to estimate properly Japan's preparedness, aggressive spirit, and strategic plans in the Pacific.

In the fall of 1941 our best military and political opinion considered an attack by Japan unlikely before 1 April 1942. The program for the defense of the Philippines contemplated that by this date all the planned defense forces would be in place.

Had the necessary bases been available for proper dispersion of a heavy bomber force, plus an adequate fighter force and air warning service, it would have required an intensive and prolonged air campaign even by a greatly superior enemy to destroy our striking power. By utilizing advance bases and keeping our heavy bombers out of range of the enemy and concealed on rear bases where the Jap agents were not so thick, the disadvantage of Jap superiority in numbers could have been overcome to some extent. A few months' delay would have thrown the Jap timetable completely out of schedule. So long as we held the Philippines and had a heavy bomber force intact, it would have been extremely hazardous for the Japs to by-pass them, leaving an air force remaining on their flank and rear.



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## PART II

# JAVA-AUSTRALIA-ABDACOM PHASE

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# JAVA-AUSTRALIA: Abdacom

SURABAYA, JAVA, *25 December 1941.* Shortly after noon we landed in Surabaya and the first phase of the Philippine air campaign was over. After Christmas dinner and two hours' rest, the evening was spent talking to Admiral Parnell, Admiral Hart's Chief of Staff, and Admiral William A. Glassford, Jr., U.S. Navy Task Force Commander. I sent a signal to the War Department for General MacArthur. The signal included my own estimate of air effort which could be exerted from Darwin and Java in support of the Philippine garrison.

SURABAYA, JAVA, *26 December 1941.* I called on the local Dutch commander, General Ilgen, who arranged for my transportation to Bandoeng and a conference there with General Ter Poorten, commander of the Netherlands East Indies Army, and General Van Oyen, Chief of the Air Forces. The rest of the day was spent aboard the U.S.S. *Houston,* where I received a rather painful three-hour treatment for my infected hands. After the first bombing of my headquarters at Nielson Field, I had imprudently handled some bomb fragments in an attempt to determine the weight and type of bombs used. By the time I arrived in Java my left hand was completely out of commission and my right hand pained me severely.

SURABAYA, JAVA, *28 December 1941.* In a conference with Admiral Glassford, our ideas were clarified and methods of coöperation agreed upon. South of the Sulu Sea, the situation as known to me was approximately as follows:



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The Japanese had effected two landings in force on Borneo —one at the oil lands on the northwest coast, Miri, and another farther down near the southern end of British Borneo. Japanese air reconnaissance had been observed over the east coast of Borneo as far south as Tarakan. The occupation of the west coast placed Balikpapan on the northeast coast within range of the Jap land-based air forces. In view of the importance of Balikpapan as a base for further Jap advances to the south, it was evident that this area would be the next objective for Jap attack.

Navy task force headquarters was established at Surabaya, the center of Navy communications to the Philippines, Australia, and the United States. Admiral Glassford established a command post at which were received all reconnaissance reports and from which orders to the cruisers and submarines were issued. Information of the enemy came chiefly from patrol squadrons, under command of Captain Wagner.

Admiral Glassford and I were in accord that the air striking force must be employed in support of the naval force to delay the movement of the Japanese to the south. It was agreed that I would order to Java immediately the bombers now based in Australia. I was to establish my headquarters with Admiral Glassford and, in the event of no further instructions, to coöperate with him as an air arm. Warning orders were sent to Darwin to prepare the 19th Bomb Group for movement to Malang, approximately 80 miles south of Surabaya and the best field in Java for heavy-bomber operations.

BATCHELOR FIELD, AUSTRALIA, *29 December 1941.* Flying to Batchelor Field I was met by Major Combs, commanding the B-17s, and orders were issued for their movement to Java. Nine of the bombers could move at once and three more within three days. The remaining two had been so badly damaged by enemy action that they required depot overhaul, which meant sending them to Melbourne.



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Darwin and Townsville, Australia, *31 December 1941.* Maj. Gen. George H. Brett, who had been named commander of United States Forces in Australia, arrived in Darwin after conferences in the Middle East, India, and Chungking. His mission was to establish supply bases and keep the supply lines open to the Philippines. He was disappointed to learn that his command did not include the air force, which was specifically exempted by instructions from the War Department.

After a long and intimate talk with General Brett, we decided to go immediately to Melbourne. Enroute we arrived over Townsville to find the east coast covered with low clouds. War apparently had taken a holiday on New Year's Eve. After an hour's cruising up and down the coast, Magnetic Island off Townsville was identified and we finally got in.

Air Commodore Lukis met us at the hotel. During my former visit he had proved exceedingly helpful and friendly. He is a dark, husky, energetic man with a keen sense of humor. After a light meal, General Brett, who was thoroughly tired from constant traveling by air for weeks, turned in.

Arriving from the Middle East by way of Chungking and Rangoon, General Brett had represented the President in talks held with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell, G.C.B., C.M.G., M.F. In these conferences General Brett told me that the attitude of the Generalissimo and his wife sorely tried his patience. He said that Madame Chiang, who sat next to the Generalissimo, became angry when the conference did not go in accordance with her husband's desires. General Brett said that at times he thought the purpose of the conferences was not to discuss military policy as requested by the President, but purely to try to make a Napoleon out of the Generalissimo.

Brisbane, *1 January 1942.* After conferences with Lukis and his staff, General Brett and I left for Brisbane, where



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we were met by General Claggett, Air Commodore Layden, RAAF, and Brig. Gen. Julian F. Barnes, who had arrived on the U.S. Naval Transport *Republic* in command of troops diverted from the Philippines.

Temporary headquarters of the U.S. Army in Australia had been set up at Brisbane, and that night General Brett held a conference outlining the organization and development of his directive, which assigned him the mission to support my operations with all the means at his disposal. In spite of his disappointment at not assuming command of the air force, General Brett was perfectly splendid. The whole theme of his conference was ways and means of procuring and forwarding air troops and supplies to the Air Force in Java. His attitude and actions could not have been more helpful. He had a reputation of being a "tough egg," but I never saw that side of him.

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, *2 January 1942.* I visited Maj. John H. Davies and the 27th Group, those unlucky pilots who were still begging for airplanes to fly. The convoy of transports bringing the 27th's A-24 dive bombers and ground personnel had been at sea when the Japs hit the Philippines and was rerouted to Australia, arriving at Brisbane on 22 December.

In addition to the 52 A-24s in the convoy, there were 18 P-40s—and we desperately needed every plane. Inspection showed that they had been loaded carelessly. Some of them actually still had the Louisiana mud on undercarriage and fuselage, reminders of the maneuvers in which they had participated last year. There were no machine-gun mounts for the rear .30 caliber guns, and no trigger motors for the forward firing guns. This latter oversight was known in the States and trigger motors were dispatched, but the B-17s bringing them were caught at Hawaii and ordered to remain there until further orders. The A-24s had no self-sealing gas tanks. Since it was a dive-bomb group, lack of protected tanks presented a grave hazard. As for the P-40s, no Prestone



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—essential for their air-cooled motors—had been shipped, and this meant a search all over Australia for Prestone.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, *4–8 January 1942.* On the return to Melbourne, my staff and I worked day and night in close coöperation with Sir Charles Burnett, Chief of the Air Staff, and General Sturdie, Chief of the Australian General Staff, for the organization of communications, the air installations, and all the details dealing with the expected arrival not only of large air reinforcements, but also of a considerable ground force which then was enroute by sea.

Heavy political and military pressure was brought to bear on me to adapt our plans to the defense of Australia. It cropped up in every conference and was the underlying motive in every suggestion given by the Australian government for the establishment of bases. Naturally, they were more interested in creating bases for the defense of their continent. Everyone in the Pacific except the Americans had written off the Philippines.

The desire of all, except Brett and myself, was to employ the American Air Force in the defense of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, and Australia. It was necessary for me to point out the following on three different occasions in the conferences and in the presence of Mr. Menzies, Secretary of the Australian Defense Committee, Mr. Schedden, Secretary of Defense Coördination, and Sir Charles Burnett; that my mission was:

(1) To keep open the lines of communication to the Philippine Islands;

(2) To support the defense of the Philippines;

(3) That action in the Malay Peninsula or the Singapore area was not within the sphere of action;

(4) That I would not contemplate the employment of any forces for such a purpose, without direct orders from my government.

On 4 January General Brett received the directive of the



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combined Chiefs of Staff for the organization of ABDACOM (Australia, British, Dutch, American Command). His difficulties, however, were multiplied. He was designated as Deputy Commander-in-Chief to General Wavell, and promoted to Lieutenant General. The directive indicated that he would be responsible for maintaining communications and supplies for all American Air Forces from the ports of embarkation in Australia to the Netherlands East Indies. It was evident that the creation of ABDACOM would alter my mission, and an immediate return to Java was necessary.

I was confirmed by the War Department as Commander of all American Air Forces in the ABDACOM area, and directed to report to General Wavell for instructions and operate under his strategic control.

SURABAYA, JAVA, *9 January 1942.* Flying to Surabaya we were met by Admiral Glassford, Captain Wagner, commanding Patrol Wing 10, and Lieutenant Colonel Thorpe, U. S. Military observer in Java. Lieutenant Colonel Eubank joined us and I learned about our successful air attack on elements of the Jap fleet in Davao Harbor on 4 January.

Nine B-17s took off from Malang on 3 January and landed at Samarinda, Borneo, where they were serviced with gas and bombs for a 5:15 takeoff the following morning. Flying the 730 nautical miles to Davao, the Fortresses dropped 32 600-lb. bombs on a concentration of enemy vessels. One Jap destroyer was sunk, and three hits were observed on a Jap battleship, and hits on several other craft.

This was the kind of operation we hoped to perform frequently in support of General MacArthur's forces on Luzon. The attack received prompt recognition in Washington, for on 6 January the following cable arrived from General Arnold:

Great admiration and acclaim here for feat of Air Force of your command at Davao against the Japanese fleet. Hearty congratulations to you and your personnel.



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BATAVIA, JAVA, *10 January 1942.* Although General Wavell and his staff were traveling informally, the Dutch Army had provided a Battalion Guard of Honor, the Governor's band, and the Governor's Chief of Protocol to greet them. The Americans present included Admiral Hart, who had been designated as Chief of the Naval Staff to General Wavell; Rear Admiral Parnell, Admiral Hart's Chief of Staff; Lieutenant General Brett, and myself.

Immediately upon General Wavell's arrival with his Chief of Staff, Lieut. Gen. Sir Henry Pownall, and Rear Admiral Paliser, R.N., Deputy Chief of the Naval Air Staff, the battalion presented arms and played "God Save the King." The American group stood at attention waiting to hear the American national anthem. They were disappointed, however, because the Commander-in-Chief proceeded directly to inspect the battalion, leaving us with our hands in the air.

I made some rather pointed remarks which I am afraid were audible, because George Brett said, "Keep quiet, you little so-and-so," much to the amusement of "Speck" Parnell.

BATAVIA, JAVA, *14 January 1942.* The next four days were filled with endless conferences with new staff members, the Commander-in-Chief, and subordinate members of the staff. Sometimes we didn't know where we stood from one hour to the next. Air Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, RAF, formerly chief of Britain's Bomber Command, enroute from London, was designated Chief of the Allied Air Forces, and I was named his deputy and acting chief in his absence. This was a complete surprise to me, as General Brett and I had insisted that I have no staff duties assigned me which would interfere with my duties of running the U. S. Air Force. In a personal talk with General Wavell I explained my position, but I agreed to act as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of all ABDACOM Air Forces, in addition to commanding the American Air Forces.

The first step necessary was the centralization of all air reconnaissance units under my control. This was the begin-



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ning of many difficult problems. American air reconnaissance was being carried out solely by Navy Patrol Wing 10 under the able command of Captain Wagner and reporting to Admiral Hart. Similar units of the Dutch Navy Air Force, also using Catalinas, reported directly to the Dutch Naval Commander, Vice Admiral C. E. L. Helfrich. Both of these sailors insisted on keeping their reconnaissance agencies under their exclusive control. It took 24 hours or more for reconnaissance reports to filter through the respective Navy headquarters and come to my intelligence section. Opposition to any change was so great that it required an order from General Wavell to make them immediately share their information with us.

Plans were made for a coalition of all operations and intelligence sections into one control center to be known as Combined Operations and Intelligence Center, where all intelligence reports were to come from the naval forces, including British, Dutch, and American elements, as well as information received from the Dutch army and from Dutch and British intelligence sources and other reporting agencies.

The organization of this command center, involving as it did several nationalities and severe infringement on the freedom of action of the Dutch who were defending their own country, required tact and diplomacy.[1]

While ironing out many matters of command and organization, the remaining members of the 19th Group continued to strike at the enemy. On 8 January, nine B-17s, led by Major Combs, took off for Kendari II on Celebes, and the next day five of them, despite poor visibility, attacked Davao. One direct hit and one waterline hit set a battleship afire and another direct hit landed on a shore battery.

On 11 January, seven B-17s left Malang to bomb enemy

[1] LATER: The fact that it operated with marked success was due in a great part to Capt. Felix Stump, U.S.N., who upon my recommendation was relieved of command of the aircraft carrier *Langley* and made director of C.O.I.C.



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ships at Tarakan, Borneo. Weather forced four of them to turn back, but the other three bombed individually. Three Zeros attacked Major Combs's ship for 35 minutes and two were shot down. The next day our heavy-bomber strength was: Five B-17s in commission for high-altitude missions; two in commission in 24 hours; two airplanes out for engine change; one ready for high-altitude mission in 72 hours; and one plane shot up and out for depot overhaul.

BATAVIA, JAVA, *15 January 1942*. ABDACOM was activated with a mission to defend the Malay Barrier, defined as a line Malay Peninsula-Sumatra-Java-North Australia. A directive from the War Department completely changed my relationship with General Brett and abrogated all control given him over the American line of communications. I was named commander of all American forces, ground as well as air, in Australia and ABDACOM. It was evident that I could not exercise this command and remain on General Wavell's staff, nor could I even retain command of the Far East Air Force. I had a long talk with Wavell and Brett, and they both agreed that the decision must be left to me. I requested General Wavell to notify the War Department that I desired to remain on his staff and in command of the American Air Force. In view of the peremptory nature of the instructions from the War Department, I insisted, however, that I must go to Melbourne immediately. There were two reasons for this:

(1) The line of communications would have to change its organization materially if my orders remained unchanged;

(2) Brett was unable to leave at this time, and many unsatisfactory conditions had developed in Australia which required immediate action.

To further complicate matters, Australia, frightened by the rush of the Japs southward, was bringing heavy pressure to bear to divert American air and ground troops and equipment to the defense of Australia.



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DARWIN, AUSTRALIA, *18–19 January 1942.* On leaving Batavia, I had full authority from General Brett and the power of my own directive to take such action as was necessary. My first move was to close Far East Air Force headquarters at Darwin and send my staff to ABDACOM, transferring the airfields at Darwin and Batchelor Field (departure points for reinforcements to Java) to ABDACOM control.

Conditions at Darwin were unsatisfactory and I changed commanding officers, assigning Col. Alexander L. P. Johnson, an old Cavalry officer, to command the Port of Embarkation. While his knowledge of air matters was not comprehensive, he was forceful and resourceful and could be depended upon to do his duty efficiently.

The very rudimentary port facilities at Darwin were crowded beyond capacity. Transports were lying in the roads awaiting unloading. All unloading was done by Australian stevedores, who were turbulent, shiftless, and completely out of control of the civilian authorities. They would not work more than six hours a day, and time off was taken arbitrarily upon the decision of their local labor leaders. The District Magistrate was without authority.

Orders were given to Col. John A. Robenson for the Artillery Regiment at Batchelor Field to undertake the unloading of the transports on a 24-hour basis without regard to the civilian labor. Upon refusal of the local stevedores to work with the soldiers and as a result of threatened violence, Colonel Robenson was directed to place two battalions of artillery on duty at the docks and to take any measures necessary to continue the unloading.

At the first appearance of these armed troops, the stevedores stopped work and left. They were not permitted to return by the guards. The protest received from the Labor Government was as loud as it was long. The American Minister also protested. The matter was adjusted with control passing to the Australian military authorities under modified martial law. No more trouble was experienced.



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BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, *20–22 January 1942*. During my previous visit with General Brett, a complete plan had been approved by the Australian authorities for the establishment of assembly and repair shops at Brisbane; a construction, assembly, and forwarding plant for fighters at Townsville; and the construction of a maintenance and general repair depot at Melbourne for heavy bombers. The plan had been given to General Barnes to execute. None of these projects had progressed beyond the planning stage.

Failure to take precautions for protection of arriving war equipment created a dangerous situation in Brisbane. Fighters had to be unloaded at the mouth of the river, transported some 35 miles by truck and railroad, and set up in the open fields. Supplies of all kinds were congested in the dock area and the threat of Jap air attack and naval raids had become dangerously real. Practically all the ships arriving from the east had been attacked by submarines. Hostile raiders had been observed in the Tasman Sea. An enemy aircraft carrier was reported in the vicinity.

The Australians continued their efforts to divert American planes to the defense of Australia. Strong pressure was brought by the Australian Government and Mr. R. G. Casey in Washington to move the 17th Pursuit Squadron, under command of Maj. Charles A. Sprague and preparing to move to Java, to Townsville and Port Moresby. I refused and communicated with General Marshall, who cabled back that I had full authority to act as I saw fit.

Urgent orders came from Washington directing me to organize any available shipping in Australian and Dutch waters into convoys to be dispatched immediately to the Philippines with supplies for General MacArthur. This project was given first priority over all other activities.

In Brisbane harbor there were six ships—five American and one Filipino—and I ordered three of these vessels, including the S.S. *Mormacasun,* capable of 22 knots, and the M.S. *Don Isidro,* capable of 19 knots, to prepare for immediate loading. They were to proceed without escort, around



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the northeast edge of New Guinea, depending on their speed and such concealment as could be effected during daylight hours in remote anchorages.

The Master of the *Mormacasun* refused point-blank to comply with the orders. His written instructions placed him under the jurisdiction of the Maritime Commission. His reasons for refusing to comply were based on his instructions and also on the fact that his crew had shipped for Australian ports only. They were all CIO members and he said he could not move without consulting with various organization leaders of his engineering, deck, and navigation departments. This was out of the question, owing to the absolute secrecy necessary. It was explained to him that a cash bonus would be given all members of the crew sufficient to allow them ample indemnity and almost financial freedom. I had $10,000,000 in cash from which to make awards prior to sailing. Upon his final refusal, I gave Colonel Johnson, the base commander, instructions to put the captain and his crew ashore and ask the Australian Navy for men to man the ship.

The attitude of this captain was in marked contrast to that of Capt. R. J. Sisneros, a Filipino, Master of the *Don Isidro*. The only requests the Filipino made were for eight .50-caliber machine-gun crews and compensation for widows or orphans of any crew members who might lose their lives. When the Master of the *Mormacasun* said he had no charts, Sisneros offered him a complete set. When he said his navigator was not familiar with Philippine waters, Sisneros offered to be his navigator and turn the *Don Isidro* over to the First Officer. Steps were taken to replace the crew of the *Mormacasun,* and loading was under way, when instructions were received from the War Department releasing the *Mormacasun*. The *Don Isidro* was loaded and sailed for Corregidor.[2]

Efforts to obtain other shipping in Australia were unremit-

[2] LATER: On 19 February Jap planes attacked the *Don Isidro* and sank her about 25 miles north of Bathurst Island. Eleven members of the crew lost their lives.



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ting. Acting under the authority of the President and after communicating with Admiral Hart in Java, I sent one submarine from Darwin directly to Corregidor with a load of .50-caliber and .75-mm. ammunition.[3]

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, *27 January 1942.* I received orders from the War Department relieving me of command of all activities except air. The American Air Forces in both Australia and Java remained under my command, and General Wavell was given authority to appoint me as Deputy Chief of Air Staff and Deputy Commander of ABDACOM Air Forces. General Brett, through his functions as Deputy Commander ABDACOM, was made responsible for the supply of the U. S. Air Forces.

In Java the situation was growing steadily worse, and I started preparations for movement of the 27th Dive Bomb Group and three Fighter Squadrons to Java via Darwin.

MALANG, JAVA, *28 January 1942.* On my return flight to Java, between Darwin and Surabaya, we encountered one of the worst tropical tempests I have ever experienced. This was the worst season of the year for flying, and our pilots often had to fly through typhoons and atrocious weather.

LEMBANG, JAVA, *31 January 1942.* There was good news at ABDACOM headquarters. A daring naval-air attack on a large enemy convoy off Tarakan in the northern part of the Macassar Straits 23–30 January delayed the enemy advance southward for at least a week. This combined cruiser and submarine attack was supported by one squadron of Dutch B-12 medium bombers operating from Samarinda II and by Ameri-

[3]LATER: This trip proved successful, as were succeeding ones. The submarine brought out surplus personnel on each voyage. Eventually, five coastal steamers were procured, and after much delay sent north, but I do not believe that more than one of them reached its destination.



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can B-17s and LB-30s (early export version of the B-24 Liberator) from Malang.

The enemy losses were:

SUNK—Nine merchant vessels, five by aircraft and four by cruisers.

PROBABLY SUNK—2 heavy cruisers by submarines, 2 transports by destroyers, 2 merchant ships by aircraft.

DAMAGED—8 hits on warships, cruisers or destroyers, 8 merchant ships, 2 smaller vessels, by aircraft.

It was a fine effort, but we can't last long without help as the Japs are coming at us from three directions: west, north, and east.

A memo from General Brett listed the air reinforcements allocated for us. Three pursuit groups, the 35th, 49th, and 51st; an engineering battalion; an air depot group; and a signal battalion, had sailed on the *Coolidge* and *Mariposa* on 12 January. On the *Kungsholm,* which sailed 24 January, were three more signal companies and the 67th Pursuit Group. Due to sail on 30 January were the 8th and 31st Pursuit Groups, the 22nd and 38th Medium Bomb Groups, and the 3rd Light Bomb Group. In addition, 160 heavy bombers were due for delivery as fast as available, most of them via the Trans-Africa Ferry route.

LEMBANG, JAVA, *1 February 1942.* The Japs had some 26 divisions operating in the southwest Pacific area, as opposed to approximately eight for the Allies, three in Malaya, three in the Philippines, and two in Java. Jap naval forces in the southwest Pacific and adjacent areas approximated 3 battleships, 28 cruisers, 7 aircraft carriers, 71 destroyers, 4 seaplane carriers, and 34 submarines. Allied naval units under ABDACOM comprised 1 heavy cruiser, 8 light cruisers, 2 sloops, 23 destroyers, and 36 submarines—and part of this force had to be used constantly on convoy escort, which further weakened our naval striking force.

The Japs had approximately 1300 aircraft in the area, of which 300 on 7 carriers were highly mobile and capable of



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being moved quickly from one point to another. The Dutch Air Force was negligible. It was estimated at four fighter squadrons, and six bomber squadrons. Their fighters were U. S. Brewsters, Curtis P-36s, and Curtis Interceptors (21-B), all obsolete types. The bombers were the outmoded B-12s. According to General Van Oyen, the Dutch tried to purchase the latest model U. S. planes, but every effort was met with the statement that Japan, the only possible enemy, did not have modern aircraft and that the Netherlands would have to be satisfied with a type that definitely was not the best. It was never certain how many aircraft the RAF had in the Malay-Sumatra region, their operational area. It is doubtful if they ever had as many as 100 obsolete planes operational at their peak. The British aircraft carrier *Formidable* transported 48 Hurricanes to a rendezvous south of Sumatra and they were flown to Singapore, arriving 26 January. Casualties among the Hurricanes were unusually high because of crash landings and inexperience of pilots. The British also had some squadrons of obsolete Brewsters. Their bombers were mediums of the Lockheed Hudson, Wellington, and Blenheim class. The U. S. Air Force consisted of two groups of B-17s and LB-30s, at about thirty-three-percent strength, one squadron of P-40 fighters, one squadron of A-24 dive bombers, and the Navy's reconnaissance Catalinas. But, owing to accidents, heavy losses, and various other factors, we were never able to get up more than 12 to 14 heavies, about 16 fighters, and 7 dive bombers at any time. And even this was rare.

LEMBANG, JAVA, *2 February 1942.* Our Navy reconnaissance reported strong elements of the Jap fleet consisting of 4 cruisers, 17 transports, and 8 flying boats ten miles off Balikpapan. Eight B-17s, led by Lieut. J. T. Connally, were sent against them, attacking from 26,000 feet. Two transports were hit, one definitely sunk, and one probable.

The Japs were determined to come down through the Macassar Straits. Our position on Java was becoming increas-



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ingly precarious. The Japs landed at Balikpapan on 23–24 January, threatening us from the north, and on the same dates occupied Kendari, Celebes, threatening our eastern flank. On the west, Palembang on Sumatra was attacked regularly from the air.

LEMBANG, JAVA, *3–7 February 1942.* The first air attack on Java came on 3 February. It was on a considerable scale. Surabaya was attacked by approximately 26 bombers and 50 fighters, Malang by 15 bombers and 10 fighters, and Madioen by 28 bombers and 9 fighters. Allied losses were 14 fighters, 12 Naval planes, and 4 B-17s; all of the last were undergoing repairs or maintenance, or they would have taken to the air for security. Later that morning another Fortress was lost in action over Balikpapan. There was no antiaircraft on the Dutch airfields, and the air warning service was totally inadequate.

The Japs came over again the next day with 26 bombers escorted by 18 Zero fighters, but were intercepted by a flight of 7 P-40s of the 17th squadron, led by Major Sprague. In this battle of 7 against 44, our pilots (who had just arrived in Java barely a week earlier) shot down one bomber and two fighters and turned back the bombers from Surabaya. We lost two P-40s, but both pilots were recovered.

The same afternoon, a B-18 which I had sent from Bandoeng to Surabaya was shot down by Zeros 30 miles west of Surabaya. In it were Colonel Murphy, communications expert from Hawaii whom I had requested immediately after my arrival in Manila to supervise the air warning equipment in the Philippines, and Maj. Austin A. Straubel, commander of the 7th Group.

The next strong attack came on 5 February when 40 bombers and 20 fighters attacked the naval base at Surabaya. Two enemy fighters were shot down and probably two bombers. Three Allied fighters were lost and two damaged, and combined with the losses in the 3 February attack, practically wiped out the U. S. fighter force defending Surabaya.



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The Japs now have the entire eastern half of Java and adjacent islands under continual fighter and bomber attacks, menacing our air reinforcement route from Australia. On February 5 a flight of 13 P-40s enroute from Australia were being serviced at Den Passar, Bali. An enemy plane was sighted and the flight leader took off with the eight P-40s which had been serviced. They repulsed a 15-minute attack of 16 Zeros and landed safely at Surabaya. The five left behind were attacked and destroyed.

Nine B-17s of the Bomber Command repeated the attack on enemy shipping off Balikpapan on 3 February, flying through wretched weather. A few days later, Dutch ground intelligence reported two transports sunk and a destroyer forced aground on fire. One B-17 caught on fire and landed on Arendas Island. While most of the B-17s were away, dive bombers and horizontal bombers raked the field at Malang for 50 minutes. Two B-17s, bombed up, exploded on the ground.

The men of the Bomber Command were battling against every conceivable obstacle: bad weather, enemy attacks, lack of equipment and personnel, superiority of enemy numbers. But somehow they kept getting their planes off and hitting back. On 5 February six B-17s took off for Balikpapan area, but were attacked by Zeros. Two upper turrets failed to function and another plane had its oxygen system shot out, and the mission was abandoned. One Zero was shot down. On 7 February, 8 B-17s took off for the Macassar area, where a carrier had been reported. Despite poor visibility and overcast, six of them searched the area for 45 minutes without success, the other two turning back because of turret trouble and low oil pressure.

LEMBANG, JAVA, *8–12 February 1942.* The situation in Singapore was growing steadily worse. It was merely a question of how long, and General Wavell himself had expressed the opinion that the city would perhaps hold out for another month or six weeks. He had hoped to reinforce the troops



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there materially, and in fact part of the Australian Còrps was at sea on its way from the Middle East.

On 8 February, at Commanders' Meeting I stated for the record, that in view of our inability to reinforce the American Air Forces, and because of losses being suffered, the Bomber Command would be ineffective by the end of March. The Malay Barrier could not be defended without a long-range striking force. I was prepared to make recommendations to the War Department looking towards the withdrawal of the remnants of the Far East Air Force, either to Burma or to Australia. I was criticized by General Wavell and General Brett for what appeared to them to be a somewhat unwarranted and pessimistic attitude.

Apparently, my statement at the Commanders' Meeting precipitated a review of the whole ABDACOM situation by the staff, because on return to my quarters I had a call from General Brett saying that the C-in-C desired me to submit an air estimate of the situation. I completed my appreciation and discussed it with Air Marshal Peirse, who had received a similar request. Our two documents were similar in their conclusions, and when presented at Commanders' Meeting 19 February produced a very disturbing effect and depressed the C-in-C. General Wavell was extremely short with both of us.

I felt it necessary to request General Wavell to relieve me of my duties as Deputy C-in-C of the ABDACOM air staff. The morale of my own air force was low and my presence was required with it.

I also was having some honest differences with Peirse concerning the employment of American bombers. While at no time were the American Air Forces employed contrary to my desires, it was evident that Peirse was being subjected to the strongest pressure to employ them piecemeal and concentrate them on the Malay Peninsula, whereas in my judgment the whole bomber effort had to be directed against the Japs in the Macassar Straits. In view of our differences,



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I did not want to embarrass Peirse by continuing to act as his deputy.

By the night of 11 February, the situation in the Macassar Straits had become more critical. Navy Patrol Wing 10 reported the movement of the Macassar Straits convoy and another from the Molucca Straits in the direction of Macassar. Orders were given for all bombers to operate against the landing at Macassar night and day.

In view of the serious situation at Singapore, pressure was again brought to bear on me to divert the bomber operations to enemy airfields north of Singapore. This I declined to do, although Admiral Hart was the only man who supported me.

In the face of General Wavell's insistence, I agreed to refer the question to the War Department for a decision. As I showed no signs of changing my mind, General Wavell finally acquiesced in my intention of continuing the attack against the Japs in the Macassar area.

Our attempt to bomb the occupied airfield at Kendari, Celebes, on 8 February, illustrated our pitiful plight. Nine B-17s took off from Malang, one turned back, but the other eight were intercepted by about 12 Zeros at 14,000 feet. They made coördinated attacks from the front and underneath. On the second attack, Capt. J. L. DuFrane's plane was hit and a mass of flames burst out of the bomb bay. Six men bailed out and were machine-gunned as they descended. On the next attack Lieut. William J. Prichard's plane was hit, caught on fire, and exploded. Only one man bailed out.

The remaining six planes finally reached cloud cover where heavy rain and turbulence made formation flying impossible and they returned to base individually. Lieut. Paul M. Lindsey's plane had its tail section shot up so badly that it took two men to hold it on even keel. When the turbulent air was encountered, it went into a spin during which the navigator, co-pilot, and tail gunner all bailed out. Lieutenant Lindsey, without the aid of a navigator, co-pilot, or map, somehow succeeded in righting the plane and finding his way home in unfavorable weather, landing safely at Malang with



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a wounded man aboard. Capt. D. R. Strother's plane, which took over the lead position after Captain DuFrane went down, was attacked from the front, causing an oxygen bottle to explode, blowing out the hydraulic system and the bomb-release mechanism in front of the bomb bay. Capt. Joseph J. Preston's plane was hit, starting a fire in the bomb bay, but he jettisoned both bombs and bomb-bay tanks instantly and got back safely. Only one airplane escaped damage. Five enemy planes were shot down.

LEMBANG, JAVA, *13 February 1942.* At today's Commanders' Meeting the question of future operations was discussed without optimism. General Laverack, commanding the First Australian Corps, was present and stated his objections to landing in Java or Sumatra. These were thoroughly sound and based on his belief that if the Corps were landed in Java or Sumatra it would be difficult if not impossible to evacuate it in the event that Singapore fell. While the conference was in progress news was received that Singapore was expected to fall within 24 hours. With the fall of Singapore, Sumatra could not be far behind. When Sumatra goes, Java goes too.

The heavy bombers executed one of their most brilliant missions during the hours of darkness. Acting on information furnished by Navy Patrol Wing 10, the B-17s flying at low altitude of about 2,000 feet intercepted Japanese cruisers and carriers approximately 160 miles east of Macassar. Direct hits were scored on one cruiser and one carrier, resulting in an enormous explosion and fire on the latter which offered enough illumination for succeeding elements to bomb the whole area with excellent results. Both antiaircraft and fighters attacked and, while all planes were damaged, they returned.

BANDOENG, JAVA, *14 February 1942.* About 8:30 this morning the Japs dropped some 700 parachutists on the city



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of Palembang, Sumatra, and the Palembang airfield, 10 miles north of town. They were dropped in three parties of seven to nine parachutists from each of about 100 Lockheed Lodestar communication planes, many of them with British markings. We were in radio-telephone communication with AVM Hunter, commander of the RAF in Sumatra, throughout the major part of the day. His description and comments on the running fight, which he observed from his headquarters, were interesting and exciting. His casual conversation and joking remarks were a remarkable testimony to his presence of mind. He had burned all his documents and had attempted to leave with his staff, but found the road blocked and Japanese snipers in the woods surrounding the field. The Japs were opposed by half a Dutch infantry battalion, British AA personnel, some armed RAF personnel, and Dutch native troops who, by evening, had eliminated most of the parachutists. None were captured.

Gave a Saturday night party to try and cheer up some of the folks. Everybody came except Admiral Hart, who apparently feels very badly about leaving us. He is returning to the United States.

Admiral Helfrich, who replaced Admiral Hart, as Chief of the Naval Staff, was a fighting old seadog. I don't think we had an ABDACOM conference at which Admiral Helfrich didn't say, "I want to take my Dutch fleet out and fight." Admiral Hart tried to persuade him that the situation didn't call for such bold tactics, but he never changed the Dutchman's mind. All Admiral Helfrich wanted to do was put to sea and hunt Japs.

BANDOENG, JAVA, *15 February 1942*. Brig. Gen. Patrick Hurley, former Secretary of War under President Hoover, arrived from the U. S. via Australia on a special mission. Hurley was discouraging about the apathy of the public towards the war, and indicated that the West Coast was the only place taking it seriously.

The Japs' seaborne expedition had landed on Sumatra,



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and a force of one division was proceeding on Palembang by all possible river approaches.

BANDOENG, JAVA, *16 February 1942.* General Wavell today sent a grim cipher cable to the Prime Minister in London and the combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington. He emphasized that landings in Java before the end of the month could only be prevented by naval and air supremacy, and that seemed out of the question with what he had. Our combined naval force was three to four cruisers, and about ten destroyers. The Allied Air Force numbered less than 50 fighters, about 65 medium bombers, about 10 dive bombers, and 16 to 18 B-17s and LB-30s, all obsolete in comparison with the enemy's planes, except the heavies and possibly a few Hurricanes and P-40s. The maximum scale of the Jap attack was estimated at possibly 400 to 500 fighters, including carrier-borne, and 300 to 400 bombers. General Wavell concluded:

As an air base, Java is of value to support naval operations in China seas and recapture Borneo, Celebes, and eventually the Philippines, but ultimate air action against Japan and Japanese line of communications must come through Burma and China. Loss of Java would not directly affect the issue of events in the Philippines, but it deprives us of one line of counteroffensive against Japan. To sum up, Burma and Australia are absolutely vital for war against Japan. Loss of Java, though a severe blow from every point of view, would not be fatal. Efforts should not, therefore, be made to reinforce Java which might compromise defense of Burma and Australia.

The situation was pretty hopeless, but we kept hitting back at the enemy. Major Sprague led a flight of eight P-40s through a monsoon to attack Palembang. They encountered two squadrons of Zeros and shot down seven of them, continuing on to their objective where they shot up and set afire 15 enemy bombers on the ground. All P-40s got back safely, one or two somewhat shot up and none with more than ten minutes' gas left.



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MALANG, DJOMBANG, AND SURABAYA, JAVA, *17–18 February 1942.* General Hurley, Air Marshal Peirse, and I left for Malang after one of our almost daily air raids. I had the whole 5th Bomber Command, officers and men, assembled in the only remaining undamaged hangar for the first Air Force decoration ceremony since war began. In the dim light given by battle lanterns and against the deafening noise of a tropical downpour on a metal roof, I read and distributed 74 citations for gallantry in action. They included DSCs, Silver Stars, and DFCs, and many of them were posthumous—for men left back in the Philippines and in the Jap-infested waters around them. It took an hour and ten minutes. My voice was gone.

General Hurley then gave an appropriate little talk, followed by Air Marshal Peirse who added just the right touch of humor to relieve a somewhat somber ceremony. After cracking his joke, Peirse, turning serious again, said: "We know what you men are doing, and what you are up against, even though you sometimes think we don't act that way. We know something else, too. The importance of what you are accomplishing, by delaying, sinking, and killing Japs is out of all believable proportion to the strength of your force. More power to you—and keep giving the Japs hell!"

We spent the night at a very delightful hotel in Malang where General Hurley insisted on being host. He was in his best barnstorming mood. Noted in Washington as a raconteur, Hurley kept the table in an uproar for two hours, relating humorous episodes of his early life as a cowhand in Texas and Oklahoma. He and Will Rogers had worked together as cowhands, and one of his anecdotes was about the dispute between two Oklahoma towns over the distinction of being the birthplace of the beloved cowboy humorist.

"Of course, Tulsa and Nowata have been claiming *my* birthplace also," said Hurley. "Tulsa says I was born in Nowata; Nowata says I was born in Tulsa."

He left for Australia at 3 A.M., in spite of the bad weather, in order to avoid interception by enemy aircraft.



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Peirse and I sat up until early morning discussing eventualities and it was at this informal bull session that I first learned that General Wavell had received instructions to evacuate the Netherlands East Indies.

The next morning I had early breakfast with Major Morocco, senior flight surgeon of the Bomber Command. His confidential report on conditions in the Bomber Command was very discouraging. Combat replacement crews did not exist. Reinforcing aircraft contained only skeleton navigating crews. Fatigue and combat weariness had worn the men to their last ounce of resistance. Pilots returned from attacks crying with rage and frustration when a crew member was killed or when weather or mechanical failures prevented successful completion of the mission. A flight commander, a fine leader, committed suicide. Boys were on the verge of mental and physical collapse. I felt that I had every reason to be thankful that I would not be called upon to ask much more of them.

After breakfast we left by car to inspect Major Sprague's Fighter Squadron at Djombang. It was a perfectly beautiful two-hour drive—magnificent sunrise over the mountains, well-ordered cultivation, crowds of gaily dressed and peaceful natives going about their work; and it was bitter to know that this place was soon to become Japanese.

We had completed the inspection of Sprague's squadron before his arrival from Surabaya where he had been on daylight patrol. He was, as always, in excellent spirits and his calm air of efficiency, confidence, and good humor impressed Air Marshal Peirse tremendously. In fact, Peirse asked me if I would let him have Sprague on his staff. I emphatically refused. Sprague was indispensable to organize and command the Fighter Group, which was then assembling at Darwin enroute to Java. I planned to promote him to Colonel and make him my fighter commander.

We took off for Surabaya and arrived at the beginning of a Jap bomber attack directed against the harbor installations and shipping. From the Interceptor Control Room we fol-



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lowed the raid throughout the action. It was Sprague's 17th Squadron again. The Interceptor Control was carried out efficiently, although commands had to be translated from Dutch to English and then broadcast by one of Sprague's Texas pilots. We had found this necessary because our pilots were unable to understand English spoken by a Dutchman over a radio telephone. Sprague's 11 fighters attacked a force of 28 bombers and 16 Zeros. Four bombers and one fighter were shot down and two of our planes lost, but both pilots were recovered unhurt.

BANDOENG, JAVA, *19 February 1942.* We were finally given authority to commandeer all airplanes available in the Netherlands East Indies. This included all of the KNILM, several of the Australian air lines, and three British Overseas A.C. planes. The evacuation of civilian personnel was started and all efforts were made to send away all female employees not of Dutch citizenship.

I had decided to withdraw the American Air Forces and I felt it my duty to wire General Marshall for instructions. At my suggestion, General Brett made an appointment with General Wavell for a conference attended by Lieutenant General Pownall, Wavell's Chief of Staff, General Brett, Air Marshal Peirse, and myself. Brett was in thorough accord with my decision, as was Peirse.

When General Wavell realized that my decision had Brett's backing, he requested me to wait 48 hours. In the meantime, he would ask for additional instructions from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, stating that the definite date for the dissolution of ABDACOM had not been given him. He was still of the opinion that effective air resistance could be maintained for at least two weeks longer, and felt that even this delay to the Japs' advance would be worth the sacrifice.

I made it quite clear that the combat efficiency of the Bomber Command had been taxed beyond endurance. This same day two of our last three B-17s enroute from India to



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Malang had stopped at Bandoeng and were destroyed on the ground and in the air during the day's fourth heavy raid.

BANDOENG, JAVA, *20 February 1942.* I notified General Wavell that I was cabling the War Department stating that it was against the best interests of the United States to maintain the American Air Forces on Java or attempt any further air operations. He accepted this with the proviso that we would remain in place long enough to cover the evacuation of those combat elements which would leave the island. I agreed to include this recommendation in my cable, provided the evacuation should start immediately and that the final decision as to the evacuation of the American Air Forces would be made by myself.

Under command of Major Ed Backus, the 91st Squadron of the 27th Dive Bomb Group arrived in Java on 12 February. They departed from Australia with 15 planes and arrived with 11; 4 of these were mired in the soft fields and were never usable. The other two squadrons, the 16th and 17th, were unable to fly to Java because the Japs took Timor and we lost the base at Koepang, cutting our ferry route.

The 27th's first mission on 19 February wasn't planned. It just happened, but it gave me a great deal of satisfaction because of the long run of misfortunes these boys had experienced. With 7 aircraft bombed up and assembled at Malang for a mission, the air raid alarm sounded. Lieut. Harry L. Galusha and Lieut. Julius B. ("Zeke") Summers were on the west side of the field and were airborne before the Japs arrived. They flew east to Bali and were well concealed in two cloud layers at 11,000 and 13,000 feet when Lieutenant Galusha said over his radio telephone: "How about going down and looking for some Japs?"

"You are the man with a wife and kids—let's go!" replied Lieutenant Summers.

"Follow me," said Lieutenant Galusha.

They dived their A-24s down through the clouds and found a cruiser and a troopship in the harbor under them.



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They scored direct hits on both ships. The Japs were so surprised they didn't even shoot at them. Navy PBYs flew over a few hours later and reported both ships sunk.[4]

BANDOENG, JAVA, *21 February 1942.* Plans for our evacuation were discussed with General Brett, Air Marshal Peirse, and Colonel Eubank. News came of the last mission of the 17th Fighter Squadron. With Major Sprague leading the P-40s as escort to seven A-24s, led by Major Backus, 30 Zeros jumped the flight enroute to bomb enemy shipping at Bali and enemy aircraft at Den Passar. The P-40s kept the Zeros away from the A-24s, but Sprague and six other pilots were lost. I gave orders for the remainder of the P-40 pilots and ground personnel to move to Djogjakarta for transfer by air to Australia. Reconnaissance planes reported later that of the six ships bombed by the A-24s, two were sunk, one cruiser was observed pulling a crippled destroyer, and a destroyer was seen pulling a crippled cruiser.[5]

BANDOENG, JAVA, *22 February 1942.* Today I received the following message from General Marshall in Washington:

1. Your own headquarters will be withdrawn in such a manner, at such a time, and to such a place within or without the ABDA area as you may decide, for its timely withdrawal is important. Dutch should be allowed to decide which of their representatives with your headquarters should leave or stay and also destination of any personnel withdrawn.

2. Amplification of instructions contained in para 1 will follow. In meantime Dutch shipping should be held and used.

3. When you withdraw, report to whom you have transferred command of Java.

[4] LATER: Lieutenants Galusha and Summers received the Silver Star for this feat. Summers told me, "It was a good thing we sank those ships or I guess both of us would have been court-martialed."

[5] LATER: Submarines sank all four of these ships.



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4. Future ABDA area now being considered by Combined Chiefs of Staff.

Later the same day I received the following additional instructions:

1. Reference paragraph 2.

All men of fighting units for whom there are arms must continue to fight without thought of evacuation, but air forces which can more usefully operate in battle from bases outside Java and all air personnel for whom there are no aircraft and such troops particularly technicians as cannot contribute to defense of Java should be withdrawn.

With respect to personnel who cannot contribute to defense, general policy should be to withdraw U.S. and Australian personnel to Australia.

At daybreak Gens. Ralph Royce, Earl L. Naiden, Albert L. Sneed, and Samuel M. Connell arrived by air from Colombo. General Brett, who left later the same night to Australia, ordered Royce, Sneed, and Connell to proceed immediately after breakfast to Australia. Before Brett's departure he gave me for transmission to the War Department his message which included his recommendation that I go to India.

LEMBANG, JAVA, *23 February 1942.* The last conference at ABDACOM was held today. The Governor General of the Netherlands East Indies announced that ABDACOM was dissolved and that the defense of the Netherlands East Indies had been assumed by the Dutch.

I was surprised and pleased, in view of my relations with General Wavell, when he asked me to walk to his quarters with him. He commended me very frankly and expressed the hope that I would assume command of the Air Forces in India and Burma. This was the first time he had expressed any appreciation of what the American Air Force had done.

Born and bred in the Sandhurst mold, General Wavell was a foot soldier through and through, but he nevertheless had



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a fairly sound conception of airpower and was considerably more aware of its capabilities than many of the officers I encountered who wanted to fight the war on the 1914–18 scale. General Wavell fought in the Boer War, lost his left eye at Ypres in the First World War, and in this war showed his genius by driving the Italians out of Cyrenaica with a pitifully small British force.

He was a very fine gentleman, extremely courteous and quiet working under high pressure. He always had an excellent grasp of the situation, and I have seen few better at staff work. I am sure that he was harried and hindered by orders from persons far away who had no grasp of the local situation. Although ill during most of the ABDACOM regime, he carried on doggedly.

BANDOENG, JAVA, *24 February 1942.* I obtained permission from General Wavell to leave Java and said good-by to the staff. He had received no word from his government, therefore could not leave tonight. I made arrangements for a Liberator to depart with him and his staff later.

We took off at 22:20 for Ceylon. I was glad to leave. Everyone realized that it was a completely hopeless task to defend Java. My desire for some time had been to give the Japs territory and get back where we could reorganize the striking forces, and I didn't care whether it was India or Australia. Brett gave me my choice and I picked India, maybe because I was sick of islands, even one as big as Australia.

ENROUTE BY AIR TO INDIA, *25–26 February 1942.* The 1800-mile trip across the Indian Ocean was uneventful. The only near casualty was myself. As I was the proud possessor of a pneumatic mattress, my attentive aide, Norman Lewellyn, had it pumped up for sea-level sleeping. At 15,000 feet the damn thing exploded with me in it, and it's hard to tell who was the more frightened, I or the rest of the plane's passengers. Captain Crowder, the pilot, came running back to see which gas tank had exploded. At 7:30 we sighted



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Ceylon and landed at Ratmalana, outside Colombo, tired but happy to have a change of scenery.

We were comfortably installed at the Galle Face Hotel. Capt. Howard Lammers,[6] U.S.N., the Naval observer in Ceylon, was exceedingly helpful in assisting me send official messages. This capable officer was a Naval Academy classmate of my brother Bill, and I enjoyed many reminiscences of my own "plebe" days at Annapolis.

The threadbare phrase "too little, too late" explains our failure to stop the Japs from overrunning the Malay Barrier. Yet the defense of the Malay Barrier failed only by a matter of weeks. Had the time element been advanced ten weeks, I believe that with the heavy bombers and fighters in Australia and Java, plus those actually enroute via India and Africa or ready for departure in the United States, we would have had sufficient air power to withstand the Japanese invasion of the Netherlands East Indies. The bombers we withdrew from the Philippines were a negligible percentage of the reinforcements which were enroute from the United States and which began to land in Australia in January.

The successful defense of the Malay Barrier depended on two factors: (1) Ability to hold Singapore; and (2) maintenance of air superiority. We could do neither.

Combined naval and air action was the only means of stopping the Japs. The allied naval forces weren't sufficient to cope with the Jap sea strength. However, with the barrier securely anchored at Singapore and Australia, combined air and naval action, assuming that timely reinforcement would arrive, offered excellent chances of delaying Japanese encroachment to the south until such time as our Pacific fleet could threaten the flank of the enemy's communications.

When the Air Force was forced back from its forward operating bases in Borneo, Celebes, and Amboina, the situation became untenable. Operating against numerically su-

[6] LATER: It was with keen sorrow that I learned several months later of the death of Lammers in an airplane crash while returning from India to his duties in Ceylon.



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perior air forces made it absolutely necessary to have airfields organized in depth. This was impossible geographically. Our bases stretched in a thin line laterally from Singapore to Darwin. Even had sufficient bases existed in Java, the topography of the island forbade any possibility in depth. Hostile air units advanced from bases well dispersed laterally and in depth and chose fat targets at will.

In Malaya the problem was to try to bring up reinforcements before the troops on the spot were compelled by superior enemy forces to retire to an extent which made reinforcement impossible. When the First Australian Corps arrived, with some of the Empire's finest fighting men back from the desert, it was too late to land them at Singapore.

After the fall of Singapore, the enemy's advance down the chain of Netherlands East Indies Islands was impossible to stop with the inferior forces available. The Dutch ground forces consisted almost entirely of native troops, sparsely distributed through the islands, completely inadequate in numbers, equipment, and training, and almost entirely lacking in automatic weapons and artillery. They fought well and courageously, but hopelessly. Extensive fifth-column activities, which were worse than in the Philippines, helped undermine morale. Enemy agents furnished material assistance in guiding night landing parties and infiltrations.

All efforts of the combined sea and air forces to check the Japs' advance from the north failed. The pattern of the Jap advance was easily apparent. His method was to secure an undefended airfield, put in antiaircraft defenses, develop the field and stock it with fuel and ammunition, then bring in aircraft. Working from this base, the enemy would attack our air forces at the next objective, and when our air strength was more or less harmless, send a convoy, with strong antisubmarine protection, bearing what was—in relation to the known strength of the defenders of the objective—an overwhelming force. Operations of this pattern were repeated so frequently that the Combined Operations and Intelligence Center was able not only to tell, by the number of type of



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ships in the convoy, the strength of the land force convoyed, but also to predict with some certainty the next objective and the date and time at which it would be attacked.

The Japs advancing down through the Macassar Straits and the Molucca Straits from the north followed a tactical procedure and timetable both sound and effective. They made audacious and effective use of their carrier force to concentrate air strength at the maximum point of pressure. The successive landing operations followed a well-conceived and well-executed plan. Action preceded the landing operations to deny air attacks and to reduce the local land defenses. The landings invariably were made by specially organized and equipped forces, preceded usually by infiltration parties put ashore in the general area but not in the immediate vicinity of the objective. Effective ground resistance to these enemy advances did not exist.

The Japs fairly leaped from airfield to airfield in their southward advance. By the middle of January they had occupied and improved Menado, on the northeastern tip of Celebes. Tarakan on the east coast of Borneo had been previously occupied. These bases brought under enemy range our advance bases on Amboina, both Kendari fields and Macassar on Celebes, and the Samarinda fields on Borneo. These fields were used as intermediate bases for missions to the Philippines and to the Jap sea forces in the Sulu and Celebes seas. Before 1 February, the enemy had occupied the Kendari airfields and thus brought our main bomber base at Malang within range. When Amboina was captured, the air reinforcing route from Australia was imperiled. Thereafter, enemy action restricted our bomber operations to a point where the load on personnel could not be met. Air raids were incessant over Java. Day after day bombers not operationally fit or those awaiting missions were ordered into the air to avoid destruction. The necessity for dispersing the few fighters we had, seriously reduced their scale of operations.



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# PART III

# CHINA-BURMA-INDIA PHASE

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## CHINA-BURMA-INDIA: Tenth Air Force

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *27 February 1942*. Left Ceylon early this morning. After a 7-hour trip due north we transferred at Asansol to a Douglas DC-3 for the 500-mile trip to New Delhi. This was necessary because the airdrome at New Delhi was too small for a B-17. General Wavell, who joined us in Colombo the day after my arrival, and Air Marshal Peirse were with me.

General Wavell, who had left India only two months previously, said to his Deputy C-in-C, Gen. Sir Alan Hartley, "Well, here I am home again like a bad penny." I personally refrained from speculating on my present worth. The Japs had chased me out of the Pacific all the way from the Philippines to India, and I was pretty damn sore about it.

On arrival at Maidan's Hotel, I immediately unrolled my bed roll and from beneath faded and dirty uniforms took out "Baby." "Baby" was our code name for $250,000 in cash I had picked up in Ceylon. A young pilot on his way to Java, in a replacement B-17, had been given this money for delivery to the U.S. finance officer of ABDACOM. He had no papers in his possession other than a hand receipt. Now that passage to Java was impossible, he was acutely unhappy with the responsibility and asked me to take the money. I accepted the money and gave him a hastily scribbled receipt. The money was eventually deposited in Lloyd's Bank. Within an hour I talked on the telephone to Brig. Gen. Elmer E. Adler in Calcutta. Lieut. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell was enroute to Chungking and wished to see me at once.

Later that night General Wavell sent for me. I found a



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Commanders' meeting in progress, resulting from very serious news in Burma. The C-in-C had decided to go to Burma at once and wished me to accompany him.

CALCUTTA, INDIA, *28 February 1942.* Left Delhi early via transport plane with a combined staff aboard, including General Wavell. We were met at Dum Dum airport by Generals Stilwell and Sibert. General Wavell conducted a conference in the Governor's Palace and the Burma situation was discussed frankly. I stated that the U.S. Tenth Air Force, which I was to command, would not be committed piecemeal nor employed until its operational training was completed. I had had enough of a fighting in dribbles. I insisted on building a striking force with a punch to it.

MAGWE AIRPORT, BURMA, *1 and 2 March 1942.* We left Calcutta before daylight for Magwe on the Irrawaddy River, 100 miles south of Mandalay, with General Wavell aboard. The Jap air raids had made impossible the continuance of operations in any strength from Mingaladon air base outside Rangoon. I was surprised to see that little consideration had been given to passive defense at Magwe. No protecting pens were built and dispersion of aircraft was largely disregarded. At a conference attended by Lieut. Gen. Thomas J. Hutton, commanding the British forces in Burma; Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, Governor-General of Burma; and others, the gloomy situation was reviewed. General Hutton showed signs of fatigue and discouragement. General Wavell did not expect to hold Rangoon. He was optimistic, however, about a fighting chance of holding Upper Burma with the aid of the Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies. This aid was not to be had without drastic concessions to the Generalissimo, which while against British policy had to be granted.

It is my understanding that some months earlier, while General Wavell was in Burma and China with General Brett,



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Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had made certain proposals to General Wavell as conditional to extensive Chinese participation in the Burma campaign. These conditions presumably indicated a definite desire to establish a zone of Chinese influence in Burma which would continue after the war. I believe I am correct in saying that this stand was rejected by General Wavell because British policy plainly indicated a determination to exclude any foreign influence in Burma.

Now the British had to have help from the Chinese. The Generalissimo's conditions were:

(1) The Burma line of Communications was to be under Chinese control;

(2) The zone of action of the Chinese armies would be in general from the Irrawaddy Valley to the eastward;

(3) The British army would operate to the west in general along the line of the Chindwin River;

(4) Chinese Headquarters would initially be in Mandalay, which was to come under Chinese control, and the British were to withdraw their installations and troops to the west bank of the Irrawaddy.

These conditions were accepted by General Wavell, whose remark was: "Well, we will have to agree; beggars can't be choosers."[1]

The ground situation was seriously disorganized. A few days previously the 17th Division had been cut off on the east bank of the Sittang River and nearly annihilated. The remnants of the division were still filtering across the river. It was obvious that insufficient aggressive action had been taken to reorganize the British forces, nor was redistribution being made with any definite plan of delaying action against the Jap advance. As a result of this general disorganization,

[1] LATER: Events show that the early stand by the Chinese was extremely unfortunate and probably caused the loss of upper Burma. Chinese troops did not participate in the Burma campaign until after Rangoon had fallen. It was too late then.



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General Wavell decided to remain and inspect the front-line troops.[2]

Word was received from General Denny, Chief of the British Mission in Chungking, that the Generalissimo had issued orders for the Fifth and Sixth Armies to move into position, but it would take the Fifth Army considerable time to concentrate and move down the Burma Road. The whole question of supply was very acute and water was a serious problem. Notwithstanding the Jap submarines and raiders in the Bay of Bengal, the 63rd British Infantry Brigade, then en-route to Ceylon by sea, was diverted to Rangoon. A battalion of Inniskillen Fusiliers, then in Bengal, were badly needed but there was no transportation. I volunteered all the aircraft we had available and two B-24s, two LB-30s, and one B-17 moved approximately 800 riflemen to Magwe.

Native troops were of little use. One battalion of native troops had already been disarmed as a result of an incipient mutiny. Governor-General Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith expressed grave fear of an uprising against the British in the event of further Jap successes.

NEW DELHI, *3 March 1942*. Leaving General Wavell behind, I returned via Calcutta, where I reported the situation to General Stilwell, who was disturbed. So far as air force policy and operations were concerned, General Stilwell was a man of few words. I told him that pending the arrival of air reinforcements from the United States, I did not expect to be able to undertake full active operations before May. His attitude was very encouraging, his policies clear. He said: "First, get results. Second, insure American command and control. Third, use your own judgment. Finally, if you need help from me, let me know."

We agreed on one main point at once: Burma must take first priority.

[2] LATER: General Hutton was relieved on 7 March by the very able Gen. Sir Harold Alexander.



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NEW DELHI, INDIA, *4 March 1942*. The initial mission of the Tenth Air Force was to support General Stilwell by direct action against the Japs in China and Burma, with the ultimate aim of operating against Jap lines of communications through the China Seas and of direct attack against Japan. The first directive for the Tenth Air Force contemplated the following units immediately:

One heavy group, equipped with B-17s, units of which were already arriving from the west.

One medium group, equipped with B-25 Mitchells.

One Fighter group, the 51st, equipped with P-40-Fs to be maintained at operating strength of 100 aircraft.

The American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers) which was operating under Col. Claire Chennault, to be absorbed as part of the Tenth Air Force, brought to full strength of 100 P-40s and redesignated the 23rd Fighter Group.

The Halverson detachment, enroute from the States for a special mission in China, equipped with 30 B-24s. Its original mission was to operate from heavy bomber bases located in Chekiang Province, eastern China. Its targets were to be Tokyo and other Japanese industrial centers.

In addition to this combat force, there was set up for immediate operations between India and China an air-transport command of approximately 100 planes to transport supplies and air material to China as a result of the closing of the Burma Road. A service of supply was included for this comprehensive project, and the supply situation from ports of embarkation to ultimate destination in China was entrusted to Major General Wheeler. The difficulties to be overcome and the problems to be solved may be appreciated when it is realized that the ports of entry, Bombay and Karachi, were some 2000 miles from the expected area of initial air operations in eastern Bengal and Assam. The air link to Kunming, China (the freight terminal), and on to Chungking involved approximately another 1000 miles of air transport.

The initial strength for the Tenth Air Force was to be



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approximately 10,000 officers and men, with an ultimate increase to more than twice that figure.

The three immediate problems were:

(1) Establishment of the air transport service to China.

(2) Organization of an operational training unit to complete the tactical training of the combat squadrons.

(3) Construction of airfields for heavy bombers and transports.

KARACHI, INDIA, *7 March 1942.* After numerous conferences with RAF and British Army personnel, the choice of an American port of debarkation and operational training center has narrowed to Bombay or Karachi. The inspection of Karachi was encouraging. Facilities of all kinds are available and the water problem can be solved. Adequate hospital accommodations are available. Incoming troops can be sheltered and operational training commenced as soon as aircraft arrives.

BOMBAY, INDIA, *8–9 March 1942.* I went to confer with the port authorities and inspect the port of Bombay. Labor trouble was always present, and the whole organization seemed disorganized and inefficient. Over 85 ships were in the harbor waiting to be unloaded. Only two shifts were employed for a total of 17 hours a day, with two hours out for "tiffin" and "tea." I decided on selecting Karachi and returned at once to complete detailed plans.

NEW DELHI, *14 March 1942.* Word came from Karachi that our first convoy arrived on 12 March. In spite of the long ocean voyage, morale was high. With the question of our main base settled, three problems now demanded attention. First in priority was the Air Transport Command for aid to China. The second problem was the allocation of airfields for the Tenth Air Force. The third question involved a decision as to the control of the Karachi air base.

Washington at first refused me the necessary freedom to



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develop the air ferry route to China. General Naiden, my Chief of Staff, received a directive from the War Department charging him personally with this job and separating him from any other staff duty. This was unacceptable. As Air Force commander, it was essential that responsibility for and direct control of all air activities in my theater be vested in me. The routes to be flown and the airfields to be used were common to the Air Transport Command and the Tenth Air Force. The Air Force, moreover, was responsible for the protection of the air route and for general security. Furthermore, I insisted on the right to employ all aircraft to assist in tactical air operations when necessary. When these arguments were presented to the War Department with the statement that any other control than that indicated would jeopardize air operations, my stand was accepted. Not, however, without a definite implied threat that "it had better work—or else!"

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *16 March 1942.* Everything indicates that the Japs are pushing preparations for a powerful attack in Burma. The bridge over the Sittang River has been repaired and the Japs are moving heavy supplies west, using elephant transport. The British hope they will continue to use elephants because the latter are easily frightened by air attack and when they go wild they stampede everything before them.

American consular officers and missionaries are disturbed. If the enemy takes Burma, as seems likely, they fear an invasion of India. The Consul in Calcutta is particularly perturbed over the safety of Americans in Calcutta. Civil disorder is a continuous problem.

Pro-Japanese propaganda is rife. As the situation in Burma deteriorates, the general apprehension becomes more acute. Among the Indians of east Bengal and Assam the fear of a successful Jap invasion is seriously affecting our airfield construction program. Reliance has to be placed on native labor, which is disintegrating and melting away. The ap-



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proaching monsoon season makes it imperative that construction be pushed to the limit.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *19 March 1942.* There does not seem to be anything that can stop the Japs from taking the entire lower Irrawaddy Valley. The Chinese Fifth Army to the east is not moving swiftly enough. There is a complete lack of coöperation between the Chinese and the British. Announcement is made of General Stilwell's appointment as Chief of Staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *20 March 1942.* Held an airfield construction meeting with General Wheeler, Air Marshal Peirse and others. A report was submitted showing that practically nothing had been done in the northeastern area on airfield construction. No one has shown any initiative in assembling labor, nor has any increase in pay been offered in the Assam district where labor is very scarce owing to fright. Unless something is done, I am going to take this question up directly with the C-in-C.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *22 March 1942.* A message from General Stilwell requesting General Wheeler, General Naiden, and myself to come at once to Burma. News hawks are arriving from the four corners of the globe for the Stafford Cripps conference on India's future.

Accompanied Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce, *Time* and *Life* correspondent, to a cocktail party where I was presented to the Jam Sahib and Her Highness. He talked very plainly on the relationship of the Princes to the Indian Government. He is the most influential of the native Princes.

CALCUTTA, INDIA, *23 March 1942.* Enroute to Burma with General Wheeler, Major Hobbs, Major Lewellyn, and Mrs. Luce. Met General Naiden, who had just returned from surveying the ferry route over "the Hump" into China. Re-



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jected Mrs. Luce's request to take her into Burma with us. I don't think a woman has any business going.

MAYMYO, BURMA, *24 March 1942.* While we were giving our recognition signals for landing, the Burmese cut loose with all their antiaircraft fire at us, but no damage was done. We left by car for the 150-mile trip down the Burma Road to Maymyo. The drive took five hours. The road was extremely narrow, and traffic and dust were heavy. There are many steep grades on the road. After two hours I was convinced there was nothing I could do about it, so I relaxed and enjoyed the view. There was a half-moon and the scenery along parts of the route was magnificent. Most of the hairpin turns were switchbacks and made everyone but the Burmese driver very unhappy. He, however, was not contented unless one wheel hung over the gorge. It turned cold after dark and the sight of General Stilwell's headquarters at 10:00 P.M. was most welcome.

We talked with General Stilwell for three hours over a bowl of the best strawberries I have ever tasted. He told us about the defeat of the Chinese at Toungoo and was pessimistic about holding the enemy anywhere in that area. He thought, however, he could make it a tough job for the Japs to get as far north as Mandalay. General Stilwell's problems are many:

(1) The water situation is acute throughout the area;

(2) Transport is a grave problem, and so will food be before long;

(3) The Chinese do not seem to have any confidence in the British;

(4) Supporting artillery is pitifully lacking, consisting of one battalion of Portee 75s with only 100 rounds of ammunition left.

We discussed the War Department's project of heavy-bomber operations from the Chuchow area directly against Japan. "What the hell are we doing trying to go to Japan to bomb when we have a war on our hands right here?" I



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agreed with him that support of operations in Burma should have first priority. General Stilwell asked when I would be ready for operations. My answer was that, depending on arrivals from the west, the heavy bombers would be ready about 1 May.

CALCUTTA, INDIA, *25 March 1942.* The drive back from Maymyo to Lashio took even longer than going down because of congestion. Three RAF squadrons were moving north, and a Chinese regiment south, and of course they had to meet at the gorge. On arrival at the Lashio airfield we ran into an air raid warning.

NEW DELHI, *26 March 1942.* Mrs. Luce and General Mow of the Chinese Air Force, and his aide, Colonel Yung, came to New Delhi with us. Mrs. Luce is rather provoked at me for not taking her to Burma, particularly since while I was away the Chinese denied her a visa to go to China. On arrival at New Delhi learned that Colonel Brady had received his promotion to Brigadier General. I am sending him to Karachi to command the Operational Training Unit.

NEW DELHI, *27 March 1942.* General Wavell said at Commanders' Meeting that there was a strong possibility in the near future of a combined sea and air attack on Colombo or Calcutta, maybe both. There was a definite movement from the Singapore area of naval forces, including transports to the Andaman Islands, thence to Rangoon. RAF reconnaissance indicated that enemy cruisers, destroyers, transports, and cargo vessels are being brought in to both Port Blair (Andaman Islands) and Rangoon. Possibility of an invasion of India through the mouth of the Ganges River is indicated. Action is needed at once to delay the movement of supplies to lower Burma.

RAF planes haven't the range to undertake Rangoon or the Andaman Islands as targets. The only force available which could reach these two targets with an adequate bomb



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load is the 9th Squadron, Tenth Air Force. My directive from the War Department had been modified to the extent that I was authorized to support General Wavell's action for the defense of India on either the Bay of Bengal or the Arabian Sea.

In view of the extremely grave situation and as a result of a query from General Wavell, I decided to put one squadron in action immediately against shipping in the Andaman Islands and Rangoon. I decided that a night operation would produce the best results with the least risk. The moon was approaching the full and we could expect eight to ten nights of moonlight weather. If this moon could not be utilized to advantage, the monsoon season would preclude operations in about four weeks. The target date was picked for 2 April, and orders were issued to move the 9th Squadron immediately from Karachi to Asansol, about 100 miles northwest of Calcutta.

KARACHI, INDIA, *28 March 1942.* Spent the afternoon inspecting the air force installations, including the 3800 air force troops which had arrived two weeks ago. A surprisingly high morale was apparent—and they had been at sea for 75 days enroute to India! The 51st Fighter Group was among the arrivals. Lieut. Col. Homer L. Sanders, from the old 20th Pursuit Group at Barksdale Field, La., is in command of the 51st. The group had hard luck with their P-40s, and only eight remained.

KARACHI, INDIA, *29 March 1942.* General Brady, General Mow, and I had an hour's talk with General Wheeler about aircraft and supplies for China, and then went to inspect the port facilities. It is depressing to see the amount of material for China's aid lying on the docks when it is needed so desperately by us as well as the Chinese. There were several hundred Bren guns on the dock.



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NEW DELHI, INDIA, *31 March 1942.* Enroute back to New Delhi we stopped at Jodhpur, capital of the independent state of the same name. We dined as guests of Col. Hanute Singh at one of the Royal Entertainment bungalows on the edge of the old palace lake.

Sir Stafford Cripps had just delivered a very able radio address which excited favorable editorial comment from the world press and from a great many Indian papers also. Most of the journalists seemed pessimistic about the outcome of the Cripps mission. It was rather significant that Mohandas Gandhi left the city tonight.

I had a half-hour's talk with Pandit Nehru on the subject of the effect of the possible failure of the Cripps mission on war production in India. He expressed the opinion that even with the failure of the mission, war production would not be diminished. As to an increase, he felt hopeful, provided it was realized that such an increase would be for the direct benefit of the Americans and could be furnished directly to the Americans. Nehru is one of the most fascinating personages I have ever met. While my contact with him was probably very irregular from the diplomatic point of view, I felt it essential that I should get such information as was possible for Col. Louis Johnson of the State Department, personal representative of the President in India.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *1 April 1942.* I again called to General Wavell's attention the fact that the airfield development for the American forces was not progressing satisfactorily. The ever-present red tape of the Indian Civil Service helped complicate matters.

I met Colonel Johnson at the Commissioner's house and expressed to him my extreme dissatisfaction with the inertia of the Indian Government in the construction of airdromes.

ASANSOL, INDIA, *2–3 April 1942.* Preparations completed for the Tenth Air Force's first mission from India. The 9th Squadron will attack Port Blair, a 1600-mile round



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trip to the Andaman Islands, and Rangoon, a 1000-mile round trip, the stronger attack going to Port Blair where the Japs concentrated their naval forces for operations in the Bay of Bengal. We cleared the field at 21:50 with Major Cecil Combs and myself leading the Port Blair flight. The Rangoon flight was to clear immediately afterwards. It was a beautiful night, with a bright Indian moon illuminating the sea for miles.

At 3:30, as we neared the northwest shore of the Andaman Islands, I took my post as co-pilot. Watch stations or shipping had reported our approach because an occasional searchlight flash could be seen from 50 miles distant. We were to bomb at 3,000 feet, and as we lost height to meet the altitude, the main details of the harbor could be seen clearly. Inside the harbor were five large ships, transports, large freighters, or naval ships. In the shadow near the shore were a number of smaller craft, probably destroyers. We approached from the east in order to get a good silhouette target against the moon and avoid presenting a target for the antiaircraft gunners.

Passing over the harbor mouth we spotted a large ship heading out to sea. Our target showed beautifully in the moon path, but unfortunately we had turned too short and the bombardier, Lieut. Bruno Delmissier, reported the sighting run too short. The antiaircraft guns on shore opened up and the rear gunner reported enemy fighters on our port quarter. We turned north to make another run. This time as we turned into our approach, the bombardier reported "on the target" and as we came closer the decks, turrets, and guns of the cruiser could be seen clearly. As the ship passed out of view beneath the cockpit a glare flared from under and Lieutenant Delmissier scrambled up to the cockpit hatch, grinning, and shouted, "Direct hits, sir!" We landed at Asansol at 11:40 A.M. on Good Friday, 3 April.

Bad news was waiting. The first plane off on the Rangoon mission had crashed at the end of the runway on the takeoff. Capt. Elmer Parsel, the plane commander, and all members



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of the crew were killed, including my senior aide, Major Norman Lewellyn.

Norman Lewellyn had served continually on my staff from the days of Barksdale Field, La., two years previous. Assigned as my aide at Savannah in the spring of 1941, he accompanied me to the Philippines and served throughout the tough days of Java and Australia. He not only volunteered for his last mission, but rebelled to the point of insubordination when I first refused permission, and I was forced to yield to keep peace in my official family. His loss was a sad blow. Not only were we close personal friends, but his silent efficiency in performing the many and often unpleasant tasks of his office had relieved me constantly of much grief.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *5 April 1942.* The success of the first American air operation from India was gratifying, and the British were generous in their approbation. The effect on my own force was electric. Everyone felt that the worst of the waiting was over and that we were at last in action again. Training and organization accelerated and I felt confident that combat units would be operating before the end of April.

As a result of the operation against the Andaman Islands and Rangoon, General Wavell desired to know if the 9th Squadron could be moved south to assist in the defense of Ceylon. Inasmuch as the entire Group was completing its gunnery training, I was not willing to commit one of its squadrons to day action at this time. I assured the C-in-C that it would be made available at the earliest possible time.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *6 April 1942.* Events, however, moved too quickly. We received word today of the Jap air attack on Ceylon and the loss of H.M.S. *Dorchester* and *Hermes.* The air attack on Colombo and Trincomalee did little damage and our air defenses shot down 35 enemy planes. The *Dorchester* and *Hermes* were caught in the Indian Ocean out of reach of air support and sunk by dive bombers.



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NEW DELHI, *14–15 April 1942.* Heard some interesting and somewhat disturbing information that most of our business is known to the British, undoubtedly through their Secret Service which does an efficient job on everybody. Had a staff meeting on the subject of security and told them I would not tolerate any more leakages.

NEW DELHI, *18 April 1942.* General Wavell is very gloomy about the Burma situation. Friction continues between the Chinese and the British. General Stilwell also is having difficulties with the Chinese generals. A definite threat is developing against the Chinese east flank and the Chinese are complaining bitterly that the British withdrawal of the past 36 hours left Chinese west flank completely unprotected.

News was received of the bombing of Tokyo by Jimmy Doolittle and his B-25s, and we drank a bottle of champagne to celebrate the event. Good for Jimmy!

KARACHI, INDIA, *19 April 1942.* Awarded decorations for the Rangoon and Port Blair raids and then inspected the troops. After the review, the messes and kitchen were inspected by a party, including war correspondents. The only wood available for shelter construction was boxes from motor and airplane crates. From these boxes, enclosed and screened kitchens and storerooms had been built for all units, and a dispensary and infirmary as well. The camp area, nothing but desert, was clean and free from flies. The whole installation would have been a credit to a command in the United States.

After the inspection went for a swim. Clare Boothe Luce, on her way back to the States, fell overboard in her swimming suit and Captain Mahoney, General Brady's aide, and Col. Merian C. Cooper, former movie producer, gallantly went to her rescue, but in the end Mrs. Luce very nearly had to rescue her rescuers.



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KARACHI, INDIA, *20 April 1942.* Mrs. Luce left for the States today. She seemed genuinely sorry to be leaving, as I believe she had formed a liking for the members of the Tenth Air Force. I'll bet her departure was better than anything she wrote in *The Women.* She arrived at the airport 40 minutes late and threw the British Overseas A. C. into a complete state of confusion. She staged one of the best helpless-woman acts I have ever witnessed. She lost her coat; then she lost her camera; and finally had everyone in a dither. She walked right by the customs and immigration people who had their mouths open. As we walked down the gangway she grinned and whispered she didn't think she would have any trouble with her papers. Previously she had been worried for fear of censorship on the manuscript she was carrying. As she entered the plane she gave the captain a very calculating glance and melted him down to her size, too.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *27 April 1942.* Several small-scale heavy bomber attacks were carried out during the last days of April against shipping in Rangoon Harbor and the Mingaladon airport. The Burma situation steadily grew worse and the feeling became apparent that the campaign was lost.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *3 May 1942.* Burma has collapsed. Mandalay was evacuated on 1 May.

General Wavell and I participated in a seven-minute broadcast over N.B.C. to the States. Wavell said:

"The presence of the United States Air Force is to us and this country evidence of the determination of the American people to stand side by side with this and other Allied peoples wherever the enemy is to be met, and is a guarantee of final success. I particularly welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to the fine work which was done and the great gallantry shown under the most difficult conditions by the United States Air Force under General Brereton's command in Java. I was also greatly impressed by the bearing of the



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artillery regiment, mainly from Texas, which I saw in Java. Every effort is being made to look out after American troops in India and we shall work with them in whole-hearted endeavor toward our common end—early and complete victory."

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *4 May 1942*. More bad news from Burma. Lashio has been occupied by the Japs. The Chinese resistance to the north has completely disappeared. Loiwing has been abandoned and the aircraft factory burned, but the need for withdrawal was so imperative that about $2,000,000 in spare tools and stock fell into enemy hands. General Alexander is making his way as best he can to the Assam border.

In the evening I was the guest of honor for dinner at the Viceroy's. The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, Her Excellency, and their two daughters, Lady Doreen and Lady Joan, were charming. My dinner partner was Lady Auchinleck, who is an American.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *6 May 1942*. On the nights of 4 and 5 May, heavies of the 9th Squadron attacked the airdrome at Mingaladon, the old AVG base near Rangoon. The Japs had considered themselves immune from air attack, and we caught 35 to 40 planes on the ground and destroyed and damaged them night before last. A direct hit from the first flight set fire to the main hangar and gave an excellent bombing target.

At midnight received a disturbing message from General Stilwell. He was trying to make his way to Homalin, about a three-day march east of Imphal, with a party of 100. He asked for food and medical supplies at Homalin on his arrival there, estimated at 10 May.

The withdrawal of Allied forces from Burma presented a serious evacuation problem and all our available transport planes were pressed into service to bring women and children and sick civilians out by air. The only means of escape was by air from the Myitkyina airport, or by very difficult and dangerous mountain trail towards Fort Hertz and thence into



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Assam, or by trail and river towards Imphal. Rains had started, and rivers and streams were becoming torrential and the mountains impassable, except for a few intricate trails. Burmese natives were hostile, and murder, rape, and pillage were prevalent. Many large parties of male refugees started out by foot, but a pitifully large proportion died on the trail of starvation and malaria.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *7 May 1942*. No word from General Alexander. Myitkyina airport was bombed twice yesterday by the Japs. Two DC-3s on evacuation work were destroyed on the airfield. AVM Stevenson reported further daylight evacuation impossible and recommended against night operations because of the condition of the field. Air Marshal Peirse and I decided to continue evacuation on a day-to-day basis, landing at dusk and leaving at daylight. There are still 100 wounded to be moved, in addition to several hundred women and children. We have removed 500 wounded and sick military personnel, and over 2,500 women and children. One DC-3 brought out 75 women and children in one trip—thrice its normal load.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *8 May 1942*. No contact has been established with General Stilwell's party despite intensive air reconnaissance. All aircraft carried food and medical supplies to be dropped by parachute. Observation was difficult because of the dense jungle growth. Wherever a ground signal was observed or suspected, food was dropped. The RAF coöperated in this mission, and some of the retreating troops received very badly needed food and medical supplies.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *9 May 1942*. RAF reported during the afternoon that they had located General Stilwell's party about 15 miles east of Homalin. Supplies will be dropped to him tomorrow, and both food and medical supplies are being sent to Homalin by air and coolie. Contact with



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General Alexander's headquarters north of Kalewa was established during the night.

New Delhi, India, *11 May 1942.* Reconnaissance reports that Myitkyina airfield is in enemy hands. Our morning ferry to Kunming, three transports, were turned back by Chennault because Kunming was heavily bombed this morning. Yunanyi cannot be used, and Laoshan is believed to be in Jap hands. If Chennault withdraws to Chungking for the protection of the capital, our ferry line over "the Hump" is out. Orders were issued for the 9th Heavy Bomb Squadron to hit Myitkyina with everything they have to prevent its use and increase the security of Dinjan.

Khyber Pass, India, *13 May 1942.* Came here to inspect the Northwest Frontier. The defile of the Khyber Pass lends itself admirably to defense. Turbulence and extreme unrest are normal among the frontier clans, and armed clashes are frequent. The situation at this time was rather serious owing in part to the decline of British prestige as a result of Jap successes at Singapore, Java, and Burma. Axis propaganda and the political unrest in India were producing repercussions.

We climbed one of the mountain peaks about 6,000 feet high and from that point could see 60 miles into Afghanistan. The northern pass through which Alexander the Great brought his forces could be clearly seen and seemed to offer a better approach than Khyber Pass. On the way back we passed a battalion of the Queen's Own Kentish marching to Peshawar. This battalion has one of the finest records in the British army and the men are all keen-looking, jaunty, and merry. General Dening requested that I take the salute and I did, considering it a great honor.

On the return to Dean's Hotel, I had messages from Delhi stating General Stilwell's exact location and giving good results on the bombing of Myitkyina airfield.



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NEW DELHI, 22 *May 1942.* Message from General Stilwell that he will arrive in Dinjan tomorrow and wants me to meet him.

DINJAN, INDIA, 23 *May 1942.* General Stilwell and a party arrived by train from Imphal at Tenserkia, near Dinjan. General Wavell and General Alexander were enroute to Imphal and Homalin for inspection of the British forces and visited General Stilwell's party for a short conference. Both he and the members of his party, some of them on stretchers, looked very haggard, but were in fine spirits. You cannot beat that kind of guts!

CALCUTTA, INDIA, 24 *May 1942.* A long talk with General Stilwell. He is fuming mad about things he saw on his retreat. Among the things that rankled in his soul are . . . 800 trucks standing idle at Lashio when he, asking for 150 to move troops into action, got 34 . . . trucks moving north into China carrying loot while soldiers go hungry . . . a Chinese Lieutenant General of the Quartermaster Corps heading north along the Burma Road with a Buick sedan on a 2½-ton truck that should have been carrying guns and ammunition . . . British soldiers throwing away ammunition and weapons on their way out of Burma. . . . (After the first incident General Stilwell said he would personally shoot the next offender.)

Col. Caleb V. Haynes, in charge of the Assam-Burma-China ferry run, reported the exciting experiences of one of his missions in a C-47 with Col. Robert Scott as co-pilot. "We took a load of 7200 lbs. over the Hump to General Chennault at Loiwing," he said. "It included tommy guns, ammunition, bacon, and a quart of scotch. While at Loiwing an air-raid alarm sounded and General Chennault told us to 'get the hell out of there.' The next morning at Yunanyi a radio message was received from General Chennault saying, 'We are having an auction sale.' This meant he was evacuating and wanted help. We had previously received a message from



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General Stilwell requesting help in being evacuated. So a message was sent to General Chennault saying, 'Similar request from Old, Old Man. Will get to you later.' [General Chennault was known as the "Old Man" and General Stilwell as the "Old, Old Man."] After refueling at Myitkyina, we proceeded to Shwebo, flying 100 feet off the ground at times to avoid detection by Jap planes, which were everywhere. At Shwebo 29 officers of General Stilwell's headquarters were loaded on the plane, but General Stilwell, a few of his staff officers, and Jack Belden, *Time* magazine correspondent, elected to make the journey back to India on foot."

Pilots on the ferry run can't be lauded too highly. They consistently flew in the world's worst flying weather and were as exposed as if they were in actual combat. Much of their flying had to be done by instruments over mountains towering up to 17,000 feet. If they got off course and veered too far to the north, they were apt to encounter peaks up to 22,000 feet. Jap-held Burma was on their other side. It definitely is no country for a crash-landing.

The AVGs (Flying Tigers) are doing a splendid job in support of our ferry run, but we can't be lucky all the time. Nevertheless, from the inauguration of regular service 1 April until now, more than 2,000,000 pounds of supplies has been moved east by air and 5,000 evacuees brought out of Burma.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *25–26 May 1942.* General Stilwell and I here to confer with General Wavell. Stilwell had a message from General Marshall, in which he quoted Chiang Kai-shek to the effect that the British failure in Burma, the departure of high-ranking American officers from Chungking, and the lack of air support and other aid from America had reduced the Chinese morale to a desperate state. In view of the determined Jap advance in the Chuchow area and the Jap success in Burma, the Generalissimo stated that immediate air support was necessary, and if it was not forthcoming Chinese resistance would be in the gravest danger of collapsing. General Marshall's message placed me again under Stil-



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well's strategic direction with the primary mission to support China.

My air plan, as submitted to General Stilwell, called for the employment of the bulk of the fighters and one medium bomber squadron in China at once. The balance of the fighters were to provide air defense for the air transport terminals in Assam. The heavy bombers would continue to operate from bases in India until such time as fuel and ammunition could be made available in China. As fuel accumulated in China, the heavies could be moved to Chinese bases. The fighters and the mediums, the latter based at Kunming, could begin their operations immediately, provided fuel and ammunition could be put in place. It was hoped this plan would increase American operations considerably and give Chinese morale an immediate boost.

General Stilwell and I agreed that operations against the Japs in Burma should still have first priority. It was absolutely essential that the air transport link to China be maintained at top capacity, and if air operations were to be conducted from China, aviation gas would have to be moved by transport plane. It was necessary to get the personal authority of the Generalissimo to alter priorities on the Lend-Lease freight program, which General Stilwell was to do on his return to Chungking. General Stilwell also was to take immediate steps to expedite induction of the AVGs into the Tenth Air Force. I proposed to give Chennault command of all fighters. I planned to move advance headquarters of the Tenth Air Force to Kunming and, as soon as air reinforcements arrived and Chinese bases were available, to form a China Air Task Force of heavies.

NEW DELHI, *28 May 1942*. General Stilwell left for Chungking today. The conferences between Wavell and Stilwell presented an interesting contrast in personalities. They were exactly the opposite in every respect: Wavell dignified, suave, and polished; Stilwell, dour, belligerent, and weather-



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beaten. Nevertheless, I know that Wavell had the highest regard for Stilwell as a field commander.

Awarded the Silver Star to Colonel Robert Scott for his fighter exploits. Throughout May he gave the Japs hell. On 5 May he destroyed four Jap planes and two supply trucks near Myitkyina. Four days later he knocked out a Jap AA battery near Lashio, and on 13 May he hit the Myitkyina air base runway twice with 500-lb. bombs. I don't think I am very popular with him because I am putting the brake on his fighter activities.

CALCUTTA, INDIA, *2 June 1942.* Stopped over here en-route to Kunming. Weather report was favorable for a night passage, and with Lieut. Col. Combs as pilot and Captain D. M. Keiser as co-pilot, we took off in our B-17 at 2300. Before departure it was arranged for the first flight of the 88th Squadron of B-25s, with Major Leland commanding, would leave at daybreak tomorrow, bomb Lashio, and then proceed to Kunming.

FLIGHT TO KUNMING, *2–3 June 1942.* The monsoon season was well under way and the weather very stormy. Because of the high mountains of the Hump it was necessary either to see the peaks or to fly on top of the overcast. At 18,000 feet we were clear of the overcast, but owing to static were unable to get radio bearings. First weather report from Kunming six hours after takeoff reported torrential rain and zero ceiling. No radio bearing was available. Our position could not be approximated because of high wind of unknown direction over the Himalayas. At this time there was sufficient fuel to remain over China an hour and return to Dinjan from our crudely estimated position. A let-down was attempted which brought us out over an unidentified airfield, which was probably hostile. If so, we had barely sufficient fuel to return. An effort to clear the overcast was unsuccessful owing to the heavy storm. Flying at 24,000 feet through icing and sleet, an approximate course was set. Much



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later, the cloud strata breaking, a river was observed, presumed to be the Chindwin in enemy territory. A course northwest would at least bring us into open country, where we could bail out. The Brahmaputra River was eventually sighted, and we landed at Tezpur with less than 40 gallons of gas. The flight had lasted over 11½ hours. All were glad to be down.

DINJAN, INDIA, *4 June 1942*. Upon arrival we learned that four of the six B-25s were unaccounted for and that one had landed with the radio operator killed by enemy action. Worse still was the fact that in the course of earlier messages, the pilot of this plane had broadcast in the clear the number of planes in the flight, their mission to Lashio, and their ultimate destination. Before landing at Tezpur we had picked up on our radio set the very discouraging conversation that one B-25 pilot was carrying on with Kunming and Dinjan. He was lost, out of gas, and preparing to jump. That was the last we heard of him.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *6 June 1942*. It was evident that because of weather conditions it would be necessary to revise the operating procedure for moving aircraft into China. I signaled General Stilwell, informing him that I would submit a revised plan as soon as details and additional information were received from Kunming.

Intelligence reports from China clearly indicated that the Japanese were aware of plans for the movement of the B-25s to Kunming and my own personal movements. I learned that a war correspondent had inquired two days previously how many B-25s had gone to Kunming, and when I was expected back from Chungking. General Chennault had reported that the Jap air activity in the Paoshan-Lashio area had been more intense on the first three days of June than at any other time, despite adverse weather conditions on the last day. It is a reasonable conclusion that they were looking for me, as well as the medium bombers. All headquarters personnel were



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assembled in three groups (officers, enlisted men, and civilians) for a security talk, and the extreme gravity of the situation was explained. The Inspector General was instructed to investigate the leak and General Stilwell's assistance was requested in investigating the China end.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *9 June 1942.* General Stilwell signaled my presence was urgently needed in China, but not to take any chances with weather. Dicussion on press relations with General Wavell. There is considerable dissatisfaction on the part of both American and British correspondents regarding the procedure for obtaining news. The American correspondents in particular complain that Reuter's is practicing gross discrimination by delaying American reports. They claim that this has resulted in Reuter's dispatches being published 24 to 48 hours ahead of the U. S. press associations.

CHUNGKING, CHINA, *13 June 1942.* Left Dinjan this morning and arrived here via Kunming. At a conference with Generals Stilwell and Chennault I outlined the plan of employment of the Tenth Air Force.

General Stilwell is very ill with jaundice and in bed most of the time. He has not seen Chiang Kai-shek for ten days, saying he had stayed away purposely to avoid being pressed about U. S. intentions.

CHUNGKING, CHINA, *14 June 1942.* Discussed the employment of the Tenth Air Force. Told Chennault that when the China Air Task Force headquarters was established he would be the commander. Col. Caleb Haynes will direct bomber operations.

I had implicit confidence in Chennault's ability to handle the job despite all sorts of difficulties. I remembered him slightly from the last war, and respected his judgment and ability. He was completely responsible for development of the tactics which enabled the Flying Tigers, using slower and inferior P-40s, to outfight and outperform the best Jap Zeros.



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Chennault devised the "hit and run" tactics and thoroughly imbued his pilots against the idea of engaging in prolonged dog-fights with the Japs. The Japs feared him as much as any man in the Far East and put a price on his head, dead or alive. Deaf as a post, Chennault would sit around in conferences like a cigar-store Indian. However, he was a good lip-reader and his agile mind followed everything closely. Completely independent, he often violated military procedure to help kill a few Japs. Although he had a reputation for being damned tough, he had a fatherly way with his men. They all loved him.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *20 June 1942.* General Wavell received a confidential message from Auchinleck stating that Tobruk would fall within two days. The Libyan situation had changed with catastrophic speed from the first of the month, and the British Eighth Army was in full retreat.

NEW DELHI, INDIA, *24 June 1942.* A message arrived from the War Department which brought a sudden end to my duty in India. I was directed to proceed at once to the Middle East, taking with me such heavy bombers as were available to assist Auchinleck. The message from General Marshall follows:

Washington, June 23, 1942

In the Middle East the situation is critical. For Stilwell. Brereton and Maxwell [Maj. Gen. Russell Maxwell, then Commanding General, U. S. Forces in Middle East] have been sent copies. Brereton will come at once to Middle East with available heavy bombers with mission to assist Auchinleck. Instruct Brereton all our units in Middle East will come under his command. Place at his disposal transport planes and personnel required. Forces taken to Middle East will be for temporary duty only. The War Department will return Brereton's force to your command at the completion of his mission. At destination to be selected by Maxwell, have Brereton arrange with Maxwell for his reception and accommodation. For liaison and coördination with the British,



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Brereton will make use of Maxwell's headquarters. Because of his wide combat experience, Brereton was selected for this temporary detail. Report size of air force made available for this temporary mission. It is desired Stilwell acknowledge receipt of this message.

MARSHALL

The following staff members were designated to go with me: Gen. Elmer E. Adler, Col. Victor H. Strahm, Maj. C. V. ("Sonny") Whitney, Maj. Louis E. Hobbs, and Captain James of the South African Air Force as Liaison Officer. Present estimate is that I'll be able to take ten heavy bombers with me. Seven more will follow within ten days.

KARACHI, INDIA, *25 June 1942.* After a quick getaway arrived at Karachi in the afternoon. Talked with General Hinds and invited General Alexander, who is in Karachi awaiting air transport to the Middle East, to go with us. Later, General Alexander's aide telephoned to say that he'd be delighted. I was deeply impressed with the appearance of our men here and the cordial relations that exist with both the British and Indians.



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# PART IV

# MIDDLE EAST and MEDITERRANEAN

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# MIDDLE EAST and MEDITERRANEAN:

## Middle East Air Force (LATER, Ninth Air Force)

HELIOPOLIS, EGYPT, *28 June 1942.* The trip from India was uneventful except for a delay of one day at Bahrein owing to dust storms. The delay was not unwelcome as it afforded me a chance to get better acquainted with General Alexander.

He seemed a very reserved man but, when I got to know him better, I found him very friendly and an excellent conversationalist. Although it was said that he had a very violent temper, I never once heard him raise his voice. He seemed quite able to keep his temper, if he had one, under control. I think the key to his character is the expression of his eyes—they are blue and piercingly alert. I'd almost say they were "killer's eyes." I found two things he did not wish to talk about: Dunkirk and his retreat from Burma. I do not blame him, because no military man likes to dwell on his reverses. But in General Alexander's case he is naturally reticent. In these two cases it was General Alexander's genius that saved his forces from utter rout and possibly annihilation. Nevertheless, I believe that General Alexander felt that he was going back to England to be used as a "whipping-boy" for the failure in Burma.

After leaving Delhi, stops were made at Karachi, Sharja, Bahrein, Basra, Habeniya, and Heliopolis on the outskirts of Cairo. After luncheon with Maj. Gen. Russell L. Maxwell and AM Drummond, Deputy to ACM Tedder, Air Officer Commanding RAF, Middle East, we went to the RAF War



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Room. The situation in the western desert is critical. The main forces are again in contact, after the Eighth Army retreated with serious disorganization from Tobruk. The withdrawal is continuing to the El Alamein position. The C-in-C, General Auchinleck, has assumed personal command of troops in the field and is at the front.

Until now the mission of the U. S. Army Forces in the Middle East was to aid Britain in Africa and Russia through the Persian Gulf. The organization necessary to support a combat air force was therefore virtually nonexistent.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *29 June 1942.* The Eighth Army has just suffered devastating reverses at the hands of Rommel's Afrika Korps. It is seriously disorganized after a retreat of 300 miles and has fallen back to prepare defenses at El Alamein. Upon the ability to defend this position depends the fate of Egypt. Reinforcements of troops, guns, tanks, and planes are on the way. In the event that the line at El Alamein doesn't hold, successive positions are being constructed to the east and all preparations initiated for a last-man defense of the Delta and Suez Canal.

Air Marshal Tedder told me of the RAF's brilliant withdrawal. This involved five separate displacements against the enemy's rapid advance, in the course of which only 40 aircraft were lost—all out of commission on the ground. In a similar withdrawal of the Germans and Italians last year, over 450 aircraft were captured by the British.

Ed Kennedy, Associated Press, called, requesting a story on my arrival. I referred him to General Maxwell, commanding Middle East U. S. Force.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *2 July 1942.* From the War Department came a request for a plan of employment of the Middle East Air Force in the event that the Battle of Egypt was lost. I had to prepare it without knowing the strategic plans for the other theaters, especially China and India. The immediate question was whether the Middle East Air Force should re-



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main here indefinitely or whether it should be moved to India and China to operate against the Japs at the end of the monsoon. My original instructions stated that our supporting air operations in the Middle East were temporary. If the Eighth Army were not defeated, this force was to be used in connection with the British campaign to destroy Rommel's army in the fall counterattack. Retention of the Air Force in the Middle East would allow direct action against Italy, Greece, and Bulgaria, materially assisting any campaign in the West or East. If the Eighth Army were defeated or destroyed, the Middle East Air Force, unless strongly reinforced, could serve no further useful purpose in the Middle East and the whole effort must be transferred to another theater where offensive action offers more chance of success.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *3 July 1942.* The situation at El Alamein is satisfactory for the present. A penetration of the north front during the early morning hours was repulsed and 400 prisoners taken. It is interesting to note that the Germans' water ration for all purposes is one-half liter per day. It is hard to believe that life can be sustained in the intense heat of the desert on this amount of water.

GHQ, EIGHTH ARMY, *4 July 1942.* I inspected the field air headquarters and the operations tent of the Eighth Army. Observed the function of Air Vice Marshal Sir Arthur ("Mary") Coningham's Command Post, and his system of liaison with Army units and the RAF supporting units. Took a short air reconnaissance towards the front lines in order to observe advanced landing fields and the movement of armored forces.

In spite of the numerical superiority of the enemy, the RAF has maintained decided control of the air since the beginning of the withdrawal from Tobruk. The RAF's morale, shorter lines of communication, and superior repair and salvage organization were the determining factors. Notwith-



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standing the fact that the Italians have considerable aircraft in this territory, they are usually ignored by the RAF in estimating the probable daily enemy effort.

No account of the British stand which stopped Rommel can fail to record the fine part played by the RAF and the New Zealand division under General Freyberg. These two undoubtedly saved the Eighth Army from complete defeat.

During the withdrawal, following the fall of Tobruk, large elements of the Tenth Corps, fighting a rearguard action, were cut off in the Tobruk area and surrounded. On 28 June the New Zealand division launched a savage counterattack against an Italian armored force, superior in strength, which, supported by the 15th Panzer Division, threatened to complete the encirclement of the Tenth Corps. The daylight attack culminated with a bayonet charge which defeated the enemy. Pressure was relieved on the whole south of the line. The consequent disorganization enabled the major part of the Tenth Corps to fight its way through the Afrika Korps during the hours of darkness, saving a large share of its equipment, including badly needed artillery.

To the RAF is due a major share of the credit for stopping Rommel's forces on the El Alamein line. Throughout the retreat, as the Axis drive intensified, the RAF's fighter, fighter-bomber, and light-bomber effort grew. The peak air effort was reached on 3 July when 155 light-bomber (A-20s and Wellingtons) and 524 fighter-bomber (P-40 Kittyhawks, Hurricanes, and Spitfires) sorties were flown. It was on the evening of this day that the enemy first gave signs of faltering. The next day the damage inflicted by the RAF's attacks on concentrations behind the lines was largely responsible for the enemy's withdrawal.

This day will be long remembered by me. It was the first time in the war that the question of moving forward, and not backward, has been raised. I was in GHQ when General Auchinleck, who had been in personal command since 27 June, ordered a counterattack at El Alamein.



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CAIRO, EGYPT, *5 July 1942.* Although the field commanders were confident that they could hold Rommel at El Alamein, it was not so in Cairo. As a precautionary measure, British GHQ in Grey Pillars began burning secret documents. As the smoke came out of the chimneys the rumor spread like wildfire that the British were going to evacuate Cairo. The Arabs helped keep this rumor alive. There were hundreds who thought that Rommel actually would soon occupy a suite in Shepheard's Hotel. The story that Rommel actually wrote to Shepheard's for reservations was pure fiction, but nevertheless a lot of people believed it.

LYDDA AIRPORT, PALESTINE, *7 July 1942.* Here at our main bomber base 20 miles from Tel-Aviv met Col. Harry A. Halverson, commander of the special unit which was trained to bomb Tokyo and other targets in Japan from Chinese bases. Enroute to India the unit was diverted to the Middle East. He gave me the operations report on last night's attack on Benghazi Harbor. Fifty-five 1000-lb. bombs were dropped with good results. One ship was sunk.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *8 July 1942.* The plan of employment for the Middle East Air Force in the event the Battle of Egypt is lost, submitted today to the War Department, follows:

If Delta Area and Cairo become untenable, there appears to be one line of action open to Middle East Air Force, based on plans of British which generally include withdrawal on the Levant with bulk of forces. Based on assumption that the Eighth Army is not defeated, but is forced to withdraw, I must stay with Auchinleck and continue my assigned mission falling back on bases in Syria, Palestine, and Iraq.

Several lines of action are open for me, assuming the Eighth Army is destroyed in either the Delta Area or Levant Area. Attempting to continue Air Force operations against a victorious Rommel would result in a futile campaign of enormous attrition with no objective. I must retire where Air Force can be most



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useful. If the Eighth Army, now reinforced with all the best-equipped units of the Ninth and Tenth Armies, is defeated, it will result in strong pro-Axis uprising in Syria, Egypt, and Iraq. African uprisings should be only in northern Egypt, and only other opposition is possibly ground action by Vichy French in West Africa. Withdrawal on Basra or India via southern coast Arabia is seen if Vichy-French ground and enemy air action succeed in interrupting the Trans-Africa Ferry Route. This based on assumption Madagascar and East Africa are still controlled by British. Consideration is given in all plans to the possibility of forced withdrawal of undefeated Eighth Army to south, in which case tactical situation would necessitate shifting plans forcing my withdrawal southward.

I recommend therefore, as long as Eighth Army is not destroyed, that the USA Air Forces, Middle East, continue assigned mission "to support Auchinleck" regardless of direction of withdrawal or evacuation of Cairo.

If the Eighth Army is destroyed, I recommend withdrawal USA Air Forces, Middle East, on Khartoum to maintain integrity of Trans-Africa Ferry Route. The basis of this latter recommendation is the fact Air Force can operate from bases in central and southern Africa to maintain this integrity, or, if required, for support of the Basra area. If forced to withdraw for other reasons, a withdrawal on India can be made.

EL FAYID, EGYPT, *13 July 1942.* Came to the advance base here to observe the takeoff of our heavies for tonight's mission. On arrival found nine heavies parked wing-tip to wing-tip on one runway, with a British Liberator squadron similarly parked. I stopped the briefing and gave instructions for the aircraft to be dispersed immediately.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *14 July 1942.* The ship that contained half of the heavy machinery and special tools to equip the air depot at Gura, Eritrea, has been sunk. This means a delay of six months. Plans were made to attach some specialists and technicians to our advance repair and maintenance units. But before this can be done the Douglas Aircraft



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Co., to whom these men are under contract, will have to be consulted. Douglas's contract with these men has a proviso that they will not be employed in active combat zones.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *17 July 1942.* The task of organizing the Middle East Air Force from scratch occupies our small headquarters staff day and night. We started out with the Halverson detachment, consisting of 23 Liberators, which arrived in Egypt 2 June and performed its first mission 12 June before my arrival from India. They attacked Astra-Romana refineries at Ploesti, Rumania, and the Black Sea port of Constanza. Four planes were forced to land in Turkey on the return flight, three near Ankara and one at Izmir, and the crews were interned. A second attack of 7 B-24s on June 15 was made against elements of the Italian fleet off Taranto and hits were claimed on the superstructure of a *Littorio*-class battleship. In late June attacks were made at the harbors of Tobruk and Benghazi. The arrival of the 9th Bombardment Squadron from the Tenth Air Force in India in the first days of July bolstered the Halverson detachment. Plans were made for the reception, training, and employment of the expected units. Forces enroute included the 57th Fighter Group (P-40 Kittyhawks), the 98th Heavy Bombardment Group (B-24 Liberators), and the 12th Medium Bombardment Group (B-25 Mitchells). They were to be followed by two additional fighter groups, the 79th and 324th, and a group each of mediums and heavies. My plans of employment contemplated the organization of two task forces:

(1) A strategic striking force of heavy bombers under the immediate command of my Headquarters.

(2) A tactical striking force of mediums and fighters operating under American command but under RAF operational control in direct support of the Eighth Army.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *18 July 1942.* Dispatched letter to General Arnold via a returning officer, and I'll bet he'll be glad



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to get this one because it's the first time I haven't asked him for a damn thing.

ISLE OF CYPRUS, *20–21 July 1942.* Flew here to examine the airfields for operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. Facilities are adequate and I decided to place one squadron of fighters on the Nicosia airfield for training and possibly use it as an advance base for the heavies.

KHARTOUM, EGYPT, *24 July 1942.* The 57th Fighter Group, the first of the combat units to arrive from the United States, was brought across the South Atlantic on the aircraft *Ranger.* Off the west coast of Africa near Lagos the P-40s were flown off her decks. They stopped at Takaradi and Accra enroute to Khartoum, under the leadership of their commander, Lieut. Col. Frank Mears.

Col. Hugo P. Rush and the first Liberator squadron of the 98th Bomb Group also arrived from the west. Rush's early arrivals were to be based at Ramat-David, 35 miles east of Haifa in Palestine.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *26 July 1942.* Col. Auby Strickland was attached to AVM Coningham's command post in the desert to familiarize himself with desert fighter and fighter-bomber techniques in direct support of the ground forces.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *28 July 1942.* With 56 P-40s of the 57th Group at Khartoum, instructions were given to move the first squadron to Muquibila, 40 miles north of Ramat-David in Palestine, to begin training. The technique of desert warfare requires specialized training for fighter pilots. Even veteran pilots of the Battle of Britain are required to receive operational training on arrival here. The primary mission of the Western Desert Air Force is to coöperate with the Eighth Army. It exists for the sole purpose of supporting the ground forces. Its broad plan of employment is first to defeat the enemy air forces and maintain air supremacy. The



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next and equally important task is to assist in the ground operation by destroying enemy troops, artillery, transport, and supply. This contributes to the freedom of action of the Army by nailing the enemy to the ground, immobilizing him through loss of vehicles and supply. Wherever his resistance on the ground threatens our attack, or he develops a counter-attack, air forces are available to attack him on request. The intercommunication between ground and air, the indoctrination of ground and air, and the mutual confidence between the two make for an unbeatable team. The fighters have a diverse role. Their jobs are to clear the air of the enemy by fighter sweeps and patrols; intercept enemy air attacks by controlled interception; attack ground forces by low-altitude bombing and strafing; and furnish fighter cover for medium bombers.

The training required for these diverse roles is intensive. Success is possible only by development of specialized technique under experienced pilots who have mastered it themselves. Fighter tactics, as taught in the States, were materially modified in the desert in order to pit our inferior P-40s against the enemy's Me-109s. Fighter-bomber technique was not taught in the States. Indeed, there existed a school of thought prior to our entry into the war which considered such employment uneconomical and ineffective. The technique of fighter cover for bombers was unknown in our Air Forces and it is most difficult to indoctrinate. This is because the pilot's sacred mission is the close continual protection of the bomber force. No matter how attractive and lucrative the opportunity, he must never leave his charge unprotected by attacking an enemy who is not an immediate threat.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *31 July 1942.* The first attack of the 98th Bombardment Group against shipping and harbor installations at Mersa-Matruh was exceedingly successful, considering it was an initial mission during the hours of darkness.

Capt. Ilya Tolstoy, with whom I had dinner last night and who is the grandson of the Russian novelist, called and, in



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confidence, gave me a brief summary of his mission. Among other things Captain Tolstoy, who is with OSS, is to engage in a secret mission in Tibet and Turkestan. The Germans are said to have a well-organized communications net and espionage system in Tibet. He seems well qualified for the mission inasmuch as he speaks Mongolian, Russian, and Cantonese. He apparently has a letter from one of our highest officials to the Dalai Lama, high priest of Tibet.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *1 August 1942.* Our heavy bombers attacked a ship convoy 90 miles north of Benghazi and sank a 10,000-ton tanker. This tanker was one of the largest in the Mediterranean service, and a note of congratulation from Air Marshal Tedder reflected the RAF opinion that her loss was a very serious blow to Rommel's oil supply.[1]

CAIRO, EGYPT, *5 August 1942.* Spent an interesting half-hour with General Wavell, who has just arrived from India, apparently for conferences with the Prime Minister, Marshal Smuts of South Africa, and General Auchinleck. He stated in his opinion that the situation in Burma would remain static until after the monsoon.

ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT, *7 August 1942.* Drove to Alexandria over the desert route. The trip gave some small idea of the difficulties of maintaining and supplying an army in the desert.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *8 August 1942.* The training mission scheduled for the 12th Medium Bomb Group the night before last was rather disastrous, two B-25s having been lost. Like the fighters, the medium crews have to undergo stren-

[1]LATER: This tanker was one of five of her class in the Mediterranean Service (1 June) which supplied the bulk of the oil and petrol for Rommel's mechanized forces and planes. Three of the five were sunk by our bombers.



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uous operational training before being ready for desert combat.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *9 August 1942.* Luncheon at the British Embassy with the Prime Minister as the guest of honor. When I was presented to Mr. Churchill he asked again what my name was and I replied, "Brereton." He said, "Oh, yes, I was in the President's office the day it was decided to whistle you from India over here to the Middle East." He said he remembered about me because of my English name. Churchill, in his pith helmet and carrying a cigar, umbrella, and fly switch, had made a personal visit to the Eighth Army front, accompanied by General Wavell and Field Marshal Smuts. Everybody knew that there was something in the wind.

BEIRUT, SYRIA, *11 August 1942.* After inspecting the progress of the training of the fighter pilots at Muquibila, flew to Beirut, capital of the French mandate of the Lebanon. Visited Nahr-el-Kel, one of the most historic spots on the Levantine coast. It was up this valley that most of the invasions of Asia from the west have been made. There were stone inscriptions on the cliff made by Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. I was invited by Gen. Georges Catroux, the Free French General commanding, for dinner at his quarters, at which Gen. Charles de Gaulle was the guest of honor. I sat next to de Gaulle and found him very taciturn and not at all an impressive personality at first meeting. However, he talks well and forcibly when he wishes, and, despite his poor English and my poor French, we managed to pass a very interesting evening. He seemed gloomy and depressed about the Russian situation, as did everyone else. The spirit of the Free French is marvelous. I have seen no one who did not impress me with his determination to keep on fighting.



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PALESTINE, *12 August 1942.* Inspected the bomber bases at Ramat-David and Lydda airports. One-half the 98th Group was absent from Ramat-David, being at El Fayid because of last night's raid on Italian cruisers in Navarino Bay. One cruiser was sunk, one received direct hits and was set afire, and a third was damaged. At Lydda the men were at chow and I inspected the mess. Their menu consisted of fresh Australian beef, potatoes, peas, carrots, and white bread. The only complaint received was that they were not getting enough sweets. I doubt if an American soldier ever gets enough. I suggested to the mess officer that candy be bought from local sources. The men also complained about the British cigarettes, which were horrible, and every effort was being made to get in American cigarettes.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *13 August 1942.* Received an inquiry from the War Department as to when the Halverson detachment and the 9th Bomb Squadron could be returned to India. This is the most childish message I have received during the war. I shall answer it simply by making reference to the strategic estimate of the situation.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *14 August 1942.* Six P-40s of the 57th Group, who have been in training with the RAF, got into their first action this morning. Forming part of the cover for 12 Baltimores and 11 Bostons which attacked the El Fuka airport, the fighters ran into a swarm of Me-109s. Lieut. William O'Neill engaged five Me-109s himself and shot down two Huns. Though he himself was shot down into the sea, he was later rescued.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *18 August 1942.* A personal letter came from General Arnold telling me that I was to remain in the Middle East. The 12th Medium Group went on its first mission with the RAF, bombing Mersa-Matruh with good results.



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Cairo, Egypt, *19 August 1942.* General Alexander has assumed command of the Middle East, relieving General Auchinleck. Gen. Bernard Montgomery has taken over the Eighth Army, and General McCreery replaces General Corbett as Chief of Staff.

Cairo, Egypt, *20 August 1942.* The Prime Minister and Mr. Averell Harriman are back from Moscow. The latter, who participated in all the talks between the Prime Minister and Josef Stalin, gave me first-hand knowledge of the Russian situation. Mr. Harriman was encouraged by the Russians' attitude. Neither Stalin nor any of the cabinet or military leaders showed the slightest doubt that the Russian armies would be able to successfully stop the Germans. Stalin admitted that they had partially underestimated the combat efficiency of the Axis armies. This was due mainly to the fact that some estimates were based on the Rumanian and Hungarian forces, untrained and poorly led, which participated in last summer's offensive. Russian strategy calls for holding the line of the Caucasus. Mr. Harriman is satisfied that there is no intention or disposition on the part of the Russians to indicate dissatisfaction with the Allied position, nor was there any intimation that Russia would stop her maximum effort unless the United Nations furnished immediate and more aid. Mr. Churchill proposed to the President an offer of immediate air support to help the Russians in the defense of the Caucasus barrier. The plan called for us to furnish planes to the RAF to man. I pointed out to Mr. Harriman that I would object to this program of furnishing additional American equipment to the RAF. I am convinced that American pilots are at least the equal of the RAF pilots, and any further equipment furnished this theater must in my opinion, be manned by American personnel.

Cairo, Egypt, *21 August 1942.* While at dinner with Mr. Alexander Kirk, the American Minister, received a warning from G-2, Middle East, of an impending paratrooper



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attack, origin and objective unknown. Warning messages were sent from my headquarters to all units concerned, and subsequent check indicated that messages had been sent, received, and decoded in less than 2½ hours.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *22 August 1942.* With Col. Pat Timberlake, Operations Officer, and Col. Charles G. Goodrich, Commanding Officer of the 12th Medium Group, went to AVM Coningham's desert headquarters for a conference. Coningham's headquarters are located along the Mediterranean shore about 15 miles from the front. Everyone is comfortable, and bathing facilities contribute greatly to the contentment and morale. There is an unwritten law on both sides that fighters will not attack personnel along the beach. No attacks have ever been made on the bathers, and it seems that there is a tacit understanding that both sides are entitled to use the beach without interference.

Plans were made to place a flight of B-25s in RAF squadrons to learn the technique of direct support, combat tactics, and battle experience. Personnel will be rotated in order to make all pilots battlewise. When air filters are installed in the P-40s, similar procedure will be followed.

The general feeling is that, if Rommel does not start an offensive during the full moon, his chance will be lost, because the Eighth Army will soon be ready for a full-scale offensive.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *23 August 1942.* Word was received that a B-25 was shot down last night by the RAF. While this is unfortunate, under the circumstances it was unavoidable. The plane commander, instead of following the sea corridor from the Tobruk area, turned south over the Alexandria and Delta defense area. He gave no identification signal, did not use his pipsqueak, did not show his lights, and did not fly at the prescribed altitude for friendly aircraft in distress. AVM McCoughry came in to offer his apologies.



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CAIRO, EGYPT, *25 August 1942.* The Eighth is ready for any action Rommel might take. The situation in Russia is extremely grave. The Axis High Command may try for a quick decision in Egypt which would put more pressure on Russia. If the German armies in Russia and the Middle East could bring about the capture of the Caucasian oil fields and the oil resources of Persia, the war would be won for Hitler.

The combined action of the American and RAF bombers and the Royal Navy against Rommel's extended lines of communication and his supply organization in Africa is reducing his available shipping at high rate and at the same time destroying a large percentage of the supplies he needs, not only to maintain him, but to build up the reserve stocks necessary for a large-scale offensive. We are attacking Axis shipping wherever we can find it—in Greece, Crete, on the sea leg south from Crete to Benghazi and Tobruk, and in the harbors of Benghazi and Tobruk themselves.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *28 August 1942.* General Montgomery, in a talk to his staff officers about Rommel's expected attack, said: "There will be no withdrawals, absolutely none, none whatever, NONE!"

He described Rommel as "a very able commander, but he has his weaknesses. He has a tendency to repeat his tactics. In fact, he has a rather one-track mind."

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *29 August 1942.* During the last two nights the enemy bombers have been exceedingly active. There were at least seven different night attacks near Hqs. Rommel, according to G-2 estimates, is expected to start his movement either on the night of 30–31 August or on the night after.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *30 August 1942.* Our intelligence reported that the movement of enemy motor transport towards the south flank has been going on for the



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last 24 hours and is continuing despite the fact that continuous attacks by our light and medium bombers have inflicted heavy damage. At midnight the enemy, as expected, commenced his penetration of the mine fields covering the southern flank and made contact with our main body before dawn.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *31 August 1942.* The German 90th Light Motorized Division, maneuvering around the south flank towards the east, became immobilized in the extensive mine fields. Their advance was halted by 1000 hours, and the enemy spent the rest of the day in attempts to open a lane through the mine fields. Our fighters and medium bombers kept up their attacks on the enemy's motor transport. By noon the dust became so bad that all air operations stopped. The expectation was that Rommel would immediately commence to move his heavy armor under cover of dust. By 1700 hours the heavy armored units were in contact with the German effort directed towards Ridge 102. The 22nd and 23rd Armored brigades of the British 7th Armored Division occupied the ridge, supported by the bulk of the artillery. The Germans suffered considerable losses and broke off the engagement at dark, withdrawing to the southwest with a loss of 30 to 40 tanks. Fifteen of these tanks, left disabled in the combat area, were destroyed during the night by British tank-hunting parties. Total German tank strength is estimated at 580.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *1 September 1942.* The 12th Medium Bomb Group last night attacked landing grounds, previously illuminated by British Lysanders. The RAF attacked landing grounds farther to the west. In the morning the 64th Fighter Squadron participated in fighter sweeps, and a squadron of the 12th Group, operating with the South Africans, attacked enemy concentrations to the southwest. During the afternoon, the Axis armored forces turned nearly north, still attempting to unmask the



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Eighth Army's position along Ridge 102. The attack was finally stopped by excellent artillery action and determined resistance by light covering forces supported by tanks, and concentrated air attacks. The Western Desert Air Force's operations were magnificent. Air action so hindered and destroyed supply facilities and transport that Rommel attempted to land ammunition by aircraft in his forward artillery areas.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *2 September 1942*. The 15th Panzer Division broke off the action and withdrew to the southwest because its supplies had failed. Much of its supply train was lost owing to air action, and vicious counterattacks whipped the German armor to a standstill.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *3 September 1942*. The Allied bombing effort was concentrated against motor transport and tanks in the Bargiel depression, where there were an estimated 1,500 vehicles, and 15 miles southwest of there, where there were an estimated 2,000. Air reconnaissance revealed that in one area alone more than 2,000 motor vehicles, and many tanks, had been destroyed.[2]

Fierce action continued on the south flank where the 21st Panzer Division, spearhead of the southern attack, met destructive and well-placed artillery and tank action which, combined with a counterattack by the New Zealanders, forced withdrawal with severe losses to Rommel's armor. His hope

[2] LATER: AVM Coningham commended the Americans who took part. In a personal message to Colonel Goodrich, commanding the 12th Medium Bomb Group, he said: "Many thanks for your assistance in a record day's bombing. We are all full of admiration for the grand work of your crews and I know our squadrons are delighted. Well done and good luck." In a personal message to General Strickland of the Fighter Command, he said: "We are most grateful and full of admiration for this grand effort your pilots are making in this period of hard work and hard fighting. Well done."



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of drawing the British armored divisions into open battle had been frustrated. At dusk approximately 3,000 enemy motor transport and the remainder of two armored divisions of the Afrika Korps broke off the attack and were in "leaguer positions" out of visual observation in the southwest.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *4 September 1942.* Rommel's final attack was repulsed—this time with the active participation of British armored units in a counterattack supported by beautifully handled artillery. Rommel suffered severe losses and withdrew to his initial positions. He was forced to counterattack the New Zealanders with the 90th Light Motorized Division in order to prevent the gap from closing behind him. Withdrawal continued through the night, and Rommel's bid for Egypt had failed. It was one of the major turning points of the war.[3]

GHQ, EIGHTH ARMY, *5 September 1942.* Wendell Willkie, on his world tour, came up to visit the front. When I arrived at the Eighth Army's Command Post, Mr. Willkie was already there talking to General Montgomery.

I had never met General Montgomery and he asked who I was. I replied: "I'm your American Air Force commander. We have been supporting you in this battle for a week now." Willkie grinned, but he knew I was a little mad and showed it. After an excellent presentation of the battle, General Montgomery said to Mr. Willkie and General Maxwell: "Well, you two are to dine with me tonight at eight."

As I walked back to the "low level" mess I was hailed by "Mary" Coningham at his caravan. There I found him and

[3] LATER: This was an important date in history. Not only was Rommel's bid for Egypt ended, but he was totally and finally defeated. He would never again take the offensive. The German hold on Africa had been broken. Rommel's career from this point forward was on the decline. General Freyberg told me that in this battle Rommel had lost his touch and that his men had become tank followers and lost their skill at handling their rifles and automatic weapons.



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ACM Tedder having a drink and joined them. When I told Tedder about the incident he insisted that I go to the Commanders' mess with him. I refused, though I was thankful to Tedder for his attitude. Tedder then said: "Fine! I'd rather eat at the RAF mess myself. Let's go." While I was arguing with Tedder that he couldn't do such a thing, General Alexander's aide came in and delivered the C-in-C's personal invitation for all of us to dine with him.

At dinner Willkie and I were the guests of honor. Willkie sat on General Alexander's left and I on his right, Coningham next to me, and Tedder on Willkie's left. General Montgomery was down by the salt. The conversation was lively and amusing. Willkie, Tedder, and General Alexander carried the ball most of the time, with Coningham joining in. When the conversation turned to correspondents we found that we had all come under the spell of Clare Boothe Luce. Willkie had known her for some years and he was very amused to hear us comparing notes. We were all glad there were not more correspondents like her, as it was difficult not to succumb to her charm and discuss military secrets with her.

PALESTINE, *11 September 1942.* On a 3-day inspection tour of our bases at Lydda, Ramat-David, St. Jean, and Ryak. Discussed with the 98th Bomb Group commanders and staff ways to improve bombing accuracy. On the last attack on Suda Bay an unexpected burst of antiaircraft fire so disturbed the formation that the results were zero. Over 50 tons of bombs were dropped on a single ship target without a hit. All agreed that this kind of bombing must be eliminated. On inspection of the service group at Ryak I encountered the dirtiest, most undisciplined group of men I have yet seen in uniform. This condition must be remedied immediately.

Mr. Willkie arrived to inspect Colonel Rush's group at Lydda. I had a guard of honor for him and, after taking the salute, he asked if I had any objections to his talking to some of the men. As we started down the front line he would halt



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about every third man and ask him where he was from. Most were from Texas, Louisiana, and other Southern states. About halfway down the line I said: "Mr. Willkie, if you are looking for someone from Indiana, I will empty the guardhouse." He laughed and said: "Brereton, I will talk to you later." Everybody chuckled. That was the last time I saw him as he left for Jerusalem after the inspection.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *12 September 1942.* Attended my first meeting of the Middle East Defense Council at which were present Mr. Casey, presiding, General Alexander, Gen. Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, ACM Tedder, Admiral Harwood and others. It took me a long time to get approval to attend these meetings. I understood the authority had to come down from the Prime Minister himself. I wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Willkie had had his finger in this, as I told him my troubles on his recent visit. Security came in for a lot of discussion. The British guard very jealously their intelligence conferences, their war room, and any activities concerning communications. They have good reason to do this because the Middle East is infested with enemy agents. The fact that only senior commanders are allowed in the war room and at conferences is unfortunate in some ways but can't be helped.

ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT, *13 September 1942.* Guest of Admiral Harwood, C-in-C Mediterranean Navy, to observe the progress of the combined army and navy Commando raid on Tobruk and Benghazi. I spent the night in the Command Headquarters and followed the reports of the raids. They were daringly conceived and deserved better success. A combination of bad luck and faulty staff work in one instance contributed to the failure. The British Army lost 557 men and the Navy lost two destroyers, four MTBs, and two motor launches.



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CAIRO, EGYPT, *17 September 1942.* Intelligence reports indicate that the enemy lines are being developed for a defense. Front-line units are now established with mixed German and Italian battalions, which is a clear indication that the Axis has given up the offensive. Excellent report from last night's bombing at Benghazi. Direct hits on a large ship and additional hits on another vessel.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *21 September 1942.* Inspection of the replacement engines for B-17Es received from the States shows criminal neglect in preparing them for overseas shipment. In the Fortresses' last raid over Tobruk, five engines failed in one flight of six B-17s. Inasmuch as these were all new motors of less than 16 hours' flying time, all B-17Es are grounded. Inspection of the motors revealed some piston rings broken and others corroded in their grooves. Many other signs of neglect were found.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *30 September 1942.* During the last two weeks of September rapid progress was made in getting the Tactical Air Force ready for the Eighth Army's forthcoming offensive. The advance echelons of the 12th Medium Group were brought forward to Landing Ground 88, and participated regularly in bombing missions with the South African squadrons. Colonel Goodrich, who brought the group over from the U.S.A., was reported missing in action, and Colonel Ed Backus, who had been with me in the Philippines and Java, assumed command on 16 September. The 57th Fighter Group moved forward to Landing Ground 174 and began participation in daily fighter sweeps and bomber escort over the front. General Strickland was designated to command temporarily the Tactical Air Force under the operational control of AVM Coningham, commander of the Western Desert Air Force.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *1 October 1942.* Meeting of the Defense Council at which the main business concerned tightening up



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of security. Stringent measures are going to be put into effect because there seem to have been some very serious leaks concerning information of value to the enemy. The impending offensive demands that the enemy must be deceived.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *4 October 1942.* A successful heavy bomber attack on Navarino Bay, Greece, was witnessed by seven correspondents, including Henry Gorrell (UP) and Winston Burdett (CBS), who went on the mission. The correspondents saw plenty of action. *Hail Columbia,* the ship carrying Burdett, was attacked by four Me-109s. Another B-24, *The Witch,* had over 100 holes in it. One of the waist gunners on Gorrell's ship was badly wounded and Gorrell climbed back across the catwalk in the bomb bay and helped administer first aid to him. We shot down four enemy planes but lost one heavy bomber in the Lebanon mountains because of bad weather.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *5 October 1942.* With the Eighth Army's offensive definitely set for late October, we must increase our heavy-bomber attacks on the enemy's lines of communication. ACM Tedder believes the heavy attacks will have a decisive effect upon the success of the ground operations.

Since 1 July the enemy has been struggling desperately to increase his reserve of supplies, particularly gasoline and ammunition. The combined air efforts of the Allies in the Mediterranean, of which the American bombers were the backbone, inflicted a loss on enemy shipping of approximately 33 percent during the past three months.

At luncheon at ACM Tedder's house, I renewed acquaintance with Lord Trenchard, Marshal of the RAF, now retired, and enjoyed talking about the last war. He recalled meeting me when I was a member of Gen. Billy Mitchell's staff. We had a long discussion about General Mitchell, who was probably the world's leading exponent of airpower. I was very close to General Mitchell during and after the last war and served on his defense counsel staff during his trial.



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Trenchard recalled the fact that General Mitchell probably would have commanded the Allied Independent Air Force had the war continued a few months longer. At the time of the Armistice, plans were completed for an Allied Air Force to consist of the French First Air Division, the RFC independent air brigade, and the American air corps. Lord Trenchard was behind this consolidation, and it was his influence which placed General Mitchell in line to command the Allied air force.

I have been asked many times about Billy Mitchell. Mitchell unquestionably had more vision than any military leader in our country after the last war. It is amazing now to go back over his theories and realize how absolutely right he was. Mitchell's case was tragic because, while the Navy fought him tooth and toenail, it was his own service that sabotaged him. Had we followed Billy Mitchell's theories on airpower, who knows how much the course of history might have been altered? I, for one, believe that the life of every one of us would have been changed if we had adopted Mitchell's ideas. For one thing, he was absolutely convinced that strategic bombing was the most economical and efficient weapon for the defense of our country. He was convinced that a properly balanced air force would eliminate the necessity for a large Navy. He proved the vulnerability of battleships beyond question in the 1921 test bombings in Chesapeake Bay when the "nonsinkable" *Ostfriesland*, veteran of Jutland, was sunk. He fought for changes in plane design in order to get heavy bombers with longer range. While he never had anything directly to do with the development of the B-17, he was the guiding influence behind the whole program which finally resulted in the Flying Fortress. He forced the Barling Bomber on the designers. While this plane was a failure, it proved that a large weight-carrying airplane could be put into the air. He was mainly responsible for the conception of the light ground-attack plane for direct coöperation with the ground forces. After the last war, the Third Attack Group, of which I was commanding officer, was



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organized at his insistence for development of close support of the ground forces. He was convinced that an army could not get anywhere without air superiority. His ideas were basically sound. His greatest sin was that he was too far ahead of his generation. Whereas he was guilty as charged of insubordination, there were other influences at work behind the scenes which resulted in his downfall.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *6 October 1942.* Cairo had its first rain of the season in the afternoon.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *12 October 1942.* The American ambassador to Russia, Admiral Standley, arrived yesterday from Moscow and I had luncheon with him at the Mohamed Ali club and later a two-hour conference, at which were ACM Tedder, AM Drummond, and General Maxwell, on the subject of heavy bomber attacks to aid the Russians. Tedder and I emphasized that nothing must be done to jeopardize the strength of the heavy bombers in the battle of the Mediterranean, and Admiral Standley agreed. It was felt by all that, inasmuch as the Middle East is the only place where the United Nations can possibly conduct a victorious campaign this year, everything possible must be done to inflict defeat on the Axis in this theater. At best, all we can give Russia now is a token raid or two, and it was felt that this isn't the time for such a demonstration. Admiral Standley does not feel that a token to Stalin would have any effect whatsoever on the outcome of operations in Russia or on the determination of the Russians to continue fighting. It is perfectly evident that, no matter what happens, the Russians cannot stop fighting. If the Russian armies are defeated, or if a peace were concluded with the Axis, the Russian government and the Communist party would cease to exist—and Stalin knows this as well as the Communist party and the Army commanders. Admiral Standley, with a thorough grasp of the situation, assured us that he would present our view to the President in the strongest possible manner.



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CAIRO, EGYPT, *13 October 1942*. ACM Tedder has received the directive for the organization of the Russian task force, and the combined Chiefs of Staff suggested that I go with AM Drummond to Moscow to discuss details with the Russian General Staff. In view of the imminent offensive in the desert, I declined to go, and Brigadier General Adler was assigned in my stead.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *21–22 October 1942*. These were the last two days before the Battle of El Alamein. During two months Generals Alexander and Montgomery have made every possible preparation to destroy the Axis armies. In Berlin, where Rommel had gone for consultations, he boasted: "I have not advanced to El Alamein with any intention to being flung back sooner or later."

The Axis armies, under General von Stumme, with General Ritter von Thoma second in command, were extended from the Mediterranean on the north to the militarily impassable Qattara depression on the south. The city of Alexandria is 60 miles east. Ever since Rommel advanced to El Alamein, the populace of Alexandria had been very nervous. During the summer many people of Italian descent and pro-Axis sympathizers actually came out on the roads leading into the city prepared to welcome the triumphant Axis armies with flowers, cakes, and sweets.

For the past two weeks Eighth Army patrols have been quietly clearing passages through the enemy's mine fields. Prior to the initial attack the Allied air forces made an average of over 700 sorties a day for four days. So important was the part the air played in the offensive that General Alexander made the date and hour of the attack contingent on the time air commanders could give assurance that air supremacy was firmly established. In the preliminary estimate of the situation by British GHQ, the comment was made: "Air strength will be vitally needed in the initial phases. The Allies enjoy superiority in the air. The Axis will suffer numerical deficiency and from aviation fuel shortage.



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The enemy can reinforce its air strength from other fronts quickly but cannot move supplies and fuel on a proportional scale for sustained heavy activity."

The heavy bombers controlled the sea communications. From July until the Battle of El Alamein the Middle East Air Force bombers dropped 3,374,000 pounds of bombs on the enemy, about one-third directed at Tobruk, vital harbor for the Axis supply lines. On the eve of the battle RAF and U. S. planes totaled 1,263. The Axis (counting those based in Sardinia, Crete, and the Dodecanese Islands) had, according to intelligence, only 713 planes.

WESTERN DESERT, *23 October 1942.* The battle of El Alamein started at 2130 hours with an artillery concentration lasting throughout the night. In the northern sector the Eighth Army had one gun to every 23 yards of front. Generals Strickland and Adler and I watched the show from a vantage point about three miles from the front, just beyond artillery range. The whole front was literally alight from the firing, and the thunder of the guns was deafening. Parachute flares lit up the horizon and the skies as the bombers roared over to dump their loads. It took two hours to drive back to the Western Desert Air Force camp because of the traffic congestion with tank-carriers moving up and ambulances commencing their grim move to the rear.

WESTERN DESERT, *24 October 1942.* The Allied fighters and medium bombers concentrated their attack on the front-line gun positions, tank groups, and infantry positions. B-25 Mitchells dropped 96,000 pounds of bombs, leaving wrecked tanks, blazing supply dumps, and blasted gun positions in their wake. Fighters, covering the bombers, saw very few enemy aircraft.

The 9th Australian division in the north found the going tough because of an undisclosed mine field. As a result the gap has not been widened enough to permit the proper deployment of armor. The advance of the Tenth Corps was



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held up. The C-in-C expressed dissatisfaction with the static nature of the offensive, and intends to tolerate no slowing down. The battle stirred up the dust so that air operations became hazardous. Two B-25s collided in their first mission after 7 P.M.; one destroyed and the other a major repair job. Two others were shot down on our side of the lines. Another belly-landed with its landing gear shot up. Lieutenant Colonel Low, who landed his damaged plane about 6 miles south of our command post, turned up while we were eating. I gave him a hot bowl of chili which we were having for our supper. During the night the Huns attacked with Ju-88s from Crete. The Tenth Corps complained bitterly—apparently some little damage was done to armor going through the barrier. The truth is our troops have been so immune from air attack that they have grown accustomed to complete protection and raise hell when they get a little dose from the enemy.

The 57th Fighter Group shot down 4 Huns today and maybe two more. The victors were 2nd Lieut. Lyman Middleditch of the Waterwitch Club, Highlands, N. J.—"Middleditch of Waterwitch," as the cowling of his P-40 proudly proclaimed; Maj. C. E. Wheeler,[4] Capt. Glade Bilby, and Lieut. William S. Beck.

The general situation at 1500 hours follows: On the north, the armor of the British Tenth Corps is through the mine barrier and has moved to the southwest, and is now facing the crack 15th Panzer Division with a battle between them

[4] LATER: Major Wheeler was shot down over Gamut on 11 November and became a prisoner-of-war. After his release at the end of the war he revealed how thoroughly the Germans interrogated him about the 57th Fighter Group. They knew almost everything about it except how it came across the Atlantic. Wheeler, tired of being hounded by the same question, finally told the Huns that the 57th came to Africa by submarine. They put him in solitary confinement for a few days for trying to get funny. Wheeler said that when he first sat down for interrogation the Germans gave him the latest news of the 57th, all of which turned out to be correct. "Bilby has your squadron now," they told him, "and your old buddy Art Salisbury has the group."



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in the offing. The 21st Panzer Division and the British 7th Armored Division are facing each other on the southern front. At 2200 hours there still was no contact of the main armored elements. It may take several days to clear the barrier and put the armor and infantry in position for the main battle.

A new technique has developed in this operation. While getting room forward and to the flanks, the main armored positions are heavily covered by the infantry and supported by powerful artillery, of which we have a decided superiority.

WESTERN DESERT, *27 October 1942.* Both sides continued to hammer away at each other during the past two days, with the main battle not yet joined between the armored forces. The B-25s were successful in breaking up two counterattacks against the Australian Division. The heavies, in connection with the RAF, sank a tanker and two motor vessels about 80 miles northwest of Tobruk.

WESTERN DESERT, *28 October 1942.* Now that the element of surprise is lost, the most vigorous action is necessary to prevent successive lines of defense being organized in the enemy rear. RAF and U. S. air action has succeeded in reducing the enemy air effort to practical impotence. Late yesterday a formation of Stukas was intercepted over El Daba, heavily escorted by Me-109s and Macchi-202s. We destroyed 22 aircraft and damaged 13. Our losses were 3 Spitfires, 2 Hurricanes, one P-40, and one Wellington. The 57th Fighter Group got four more victories, making 23 enemy planes destroyed by them since the battle started.

WESTERN DESERT, *30 October 1942* The enemy was allowed no respite, with the Australians keeping up the pressure in the north, making him fight and wearing him down. ACM Tedder visited the American flyers. He is keenly alive to what they are accomplishing.



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WESTERN DESERT, *31 October 1942*. The plan of employment for the next operation was announced at Commanders' Meeting last night. The attack has been delayed because of the time required to redistribute the supporting forces. An enemy salient in the north was pinched off and the line shortened. New Me-109s were reported in action today, probably those reported on their way last week from the Russian front.

WESTERN DESERT, *1 November 1942*. First signs of lowering enemy morale developed yesterday in questioning German officer prisoners. They are not so sure Rommel is going to win. They all complain about lack of water, ammunition, petrol, and other essentials—a tribute to our air action in bleeding Rommel's supply lines. The P Ws say that Rommel has at least one Fighter Staffel ("Group") on the way and maybe more. Enemy fighter action is confined to infrequent sorties in strength, usually in support of Stuka operations.

WESTERN DESERT, *2–3 November 1942*. The final phase of the battle of El Alamein opened with a strong attack due west of the 51st Highlanders and the New Zealand division, supported north and south by the Australians and South Africans. The bulk of Montgomery's medium-tank strength, including U. S. Mark IV (Sherman) tanks, had by this time passed through two gaps in the mine fields. It was now committed, behind the infantry, to the critical breakthrough.[5] The 1st and 10th Armored Divisions pushed westward and engaged the main body of Axis tanks in a violent and decisive engagement at Tel el Aqqaqir. Characteristically, Rommel attacked with his main tank strength. At one time 176 tanks

[5] LATER: It is interesting to note the difference in armored tactics in this battle as compared with later tank action in Western Europe. In Europe the terrain rarely offered such maneuver space as made possible the large-scale actions of armor against armor which took place in the desert.



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converged simultaneously from north and south against the British positions. Rommel brought the famous 88-mm. anti-tank guns into position, and they were deadly effective at short range, particularly against British tanks, well silhouetted by the dawn light. The battle raged all the first day. It was one of the greatest tank battles of the desert and casualties ran high on both sides. Forty-eight enemy tanks were reported on fire. Three armored-car regiments in the south went through the gap in the mine fields and headed for El Daba, in the rear of the enemy lines, where they created havoc in one of the most daring raids of the desert warfare, destroying over two hundred vehicles and many guns. The air force's job was to protect them against hostile air attack. By midafternoon of the second day there were signs of crumbling enemy resistance.

General Montgomery's order of the day told the story.

"The present battle has now lasted 12 days, during which all troops have fought so magnificently that the enemy is being worn down. He has just reached the breaking point, and he is trying to get his army away. The RAF is taking a heavy toll of his columns moving west on the main coast road. I call on all troops to keep up the pressure and not relax for one moment. We have the chance of putting the whole Panzer Army in the bag, and we will do so. I congratulate all troops on what has been achieved. Complete victory is almost in sight. On your behalf, I have sent a separate message to the RAF thanking them for their quite magnificent support.

During 3 November a daylight raid was made by the heavies on Tobruk harbor, where two Axis cargo ships, one a tanker, were set afire and wrecked. ACM Tedder knew what we were doing, even if Montgomery neglected us in his order of the day. Tedder signaled: "Glad if you would convey my hearty congratulations to the Bomber Command on the good bag at Tobruk, which is especially valuable at the present critical stage of operations."



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Western Desert, *4 November 1942.* The enemy's withdrawal, which started last night, continued and the roads were congested, but the retreat was orderly and dispersal of vehicles maintained. However, our fighters and fighter-bombers poured in on them and their losses were terrific. The 10th Armored Division, racing across the desert, outflanked the enemy retreating along the coast road and destroyed 54 German tanks and captured 1,000 prisoners. General von Thoma, who had replaced General von Stumme (killed in an air attack on his headquarters) as second-in-command, was captured on a personal reconnaissance in a tank.[6]

Informed that Lieut. Gen. Frank M. Andrews[7] had arrived in Cairo to take command of the Middle East Theater. I knew of no one I had rather serve under than Frank Andrews, whom I considered the strongest man we had in the Air Force after General Billy Mitchell. He had fought continually for the development of the heavy bomber program and at one time was reduced in rank from Major General to Colonel and sent to Eighth Corps Area Headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, to be put on the shelf. But he was recalled to Washington and made G-3 of the General Staff. Had it not been for his foresight, we would have been at least two years behind in our heavy bomber program.

[6] Later: In interviews with intelligence officers, General von Thoma said that Rommel made two tactical blunders in preparing for the British offensive: (1) He massed his armor and anti-tank guns so near the front in the north that artillery fire took a heavy toll; (2) he arranged his mine fields so that they were not all within observation of supporting artillery, permitting them to be cleared much more easily. Thoma was second-guessing Rommel. His two points are well taken but they were not decisive in the outcome of the battle. Air supremacy dug Rommel's grave. Our air attacks choked off his supplies across the Mediterranean and then chewed up his transport system overland. These two factors gave the Eighth Army its springboard to victory.

[7] Later: After being moved to England, where he was made commander of the European Theater of Operations, General Andrews was killed in an airplane accident 10 May 1943 in Iceland.



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WESTERN DESERT, *5 November 1942.* If the battle continues to go as it has there is every reason to believe that Rommel's forces will be destroyed. Last night was the best night yet for air attacks. The coast road was congested, head to tail, throughout the night. Terrific carnage was reported. Enemy transports no longer stopped or dispersed during the attacks. They kept moving, merely turning aside for destroyed or burning tanks and trucks. It was evident that Rommel's main purpose was to escape with as many German soldiers and equipment as possible and sacrifice the Italians. The Afrika Korps tried to make a stand at the Fuka escarpment, but the New Zealanders and the 1st and 7th Armored Divisions, in a brief but sharp rearguard action, won a decisive victory and hastened Rommel's withdrawal. The Army, with the coast road in complete control, requested no more bombing of the road for fear of attacking friendly forces. In the south the Italian withdrawal became a rout.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *6 November 1942.* The backbone of Axis strength is now broken and, except for delaying actions, no firm stand can be made short of the El Agheila position, 800 miles west of El Alamein. By evening the advance elements of the Eighth Army were in Mersa-Matruh. GHQ reports the enemy's morale badly shaken and many cases of both Germans and Italians driving their own transport eastward to surrender.

The American contribution to the winning of the Battle of El Alamein was not inconsiderable. The organizations which took part were the 57th Fighter Group, reinforced by pilots from the 79th Fighter Group, who were breaking in, the 12th Medium Bomb Group, the 98th and 376th Bomb Group, and the 9th Bomb Squadron, flying B-17s, which had come from India with me. During the 14 days of battle the American planes flew 1,366 sorties. From 1 October to the end of the battle, 45 enemy planes were confirmed shot down, with more than 55 probably destroyed. Thousands of tons of Axis shipping were damaged and destroyed, and the desert



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was littered with hundreds of tanks and motor vehicles immobilized or burnt out by air attacks. Our losses were four fighters, one medium bomber, and one heavy bomber.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *7 November 1942.* Our heavy bombers attacked Benghazi and Tobruk harbors, sinking the large Italian tanker *Petresino* in Benghazi and a large ammunition and tank carrier in Tobruk. The *Petresino* was one of the few remaining Axis tankers. Rommel is abandoning equipment because of the lack of fuel. Pursuit of Rommel's forces was handicapped by rain which restricted movement on the coast road, and prevented movement of encircling forces off the road.

GHQ estimates that more than 20,000 prisoners have been captured, and over 400 guns and 350 tanks captured or destroyed. This means more because the British are always ultraconservative in their initial estimates.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *8 November 1942.* Received notice of the Allied expeditionary forces' landing in North Africa.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *10 November 1942.* Conference with General Andrews and General Adler about the organization of air transport to assist in the Eighth Army's advance. Present estimates are that we will be called on to transport 190 tons daily. While awaiting the arrival of the 316th Troop Carrier Group from the States, thirty C-47s were borrowed from the Africa Air Transport.

By this date, the bulk of Rommel's retreating forces had passed the wire barrier on the Egyptian frontier and Egypt was freed of the invader, save for isolated parties wandering around the desert. The Eighth Army has advanced about 300 miles in 19 days.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *11 November 1942.* Authority to activate the Ninth Air Force has been granted by Washington, and General Orders No. 1 will be run off tomorrow announc-



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ing the activation of the new force, which will include all U. S. Army Air Force units in the Middle East. The same order will activate the Ninth Bomber Command under Brigadier General Pat Timberlake, who was promoted on 2 November, and the Ninth Air Service Command, under Brigadier General Elmer E. Adler.

HQS WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *13 November 1942*. The bulk of the Eighth Army has occupied Tobruk and is operating west thereof opposed by mobile rearguard action of the Afrika Korps. At this time the supply situation of the Eighth Army, owing to its rapid advance, resulted in a decision by General Montgomery to attempt no interception of the enemy in retreat towards Benghazi. The decision was disappointing. In spite of the supply situation, it was hoped that General Montgomery would execute his original plan, which was an encircling movement, crossing the desert south of the Benghazi "Hump" and interposing himself between Rommel's forces and the El Agheila position. Extensive works had been constructed at El Agheila whose natural terrain offers strong defensive positions. If Rommel can occupy this position without molestation, the final victory in the desert will be delayed.

The encircling movement, naturally, is hazardous and would incur losses. It is a daring conception but the situation clearly indicates the possible rewards. The Italian army had already been routed with five divisions virtually destroyed. Rommel's armor was practically ineffective. His combat strength was hardly 50-percent effective. His supply system had been wrecked to such an extent that much of his aircraft, armor, and motor transport was left immobile on the battlefields and landing fields owing to the lack of fuel. His air force had been knocked to the ground and kept there. Presumably this plan to send a highly mobile force south across the desert to intercept Rommel was discarded because of the supply problem. In my opinion the gamble was worth the risk. Had the supply problem been worked out in detail



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in advance, I believe it could have been solved. It seems possible that by utilizing air transport and diverting all available combat aircraft to supply work, sufficient munitions and supplies could have been furnished to enable the Eighth Army to cut off and destroy the demoralized remnants of the Afrika Korps.

WESTERN DESERT, *14 November 1942*. At a simple ceremony at the Hq, 57th Fighter Group, Lieutenant Middleditch, the 57th first Ace, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. I read the citation and AM Coningham pinned it on him. It came as a surprise to the group, and some of the men turned out in a strange assortment of uniforms—cooks in aprons and cape made from flour sacks, mechanics from the line stripped to the waist, squadron clerks in shirt-sleeves, and assorted G.I.s covered with red desert dust. Lieutenant Middleditch himself was unprepared and, during the ceremony, I'll swear I saw what looked like one end of a roll of toilet paper bulging out of the patch pocket on the front of his flying suit. Toilet paper was a scarce commodity in the desert.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *15 November 1942*. Flew along the coast road, which was a foolhardy thing to do in view of the enemy air activity. We saw one fuel convoy which had been attacked and destroyed by enemy bombers from Crete. Rommel is now trying to choke off the Eighth Army's supplies. The timely arrival of the 316th Troop Carrier Group with 52 freight-carrying C-47s will greatly facilitate the supply of the Eighth Army's westward trek.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *16 November 1942*. General Adler and AM Drummond departed on their mission to Moscow. They are to talk to the Russians about bases from which heavy bombers can operate against the southeastern front. All the Fighter pilots of the 79th Group have arrived, and 90 P-40s are ashore at Takoradi. General Montgomery is sticking to



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his plan to reorganize in the Gazala-Martuba-Derna area and to push forward supplies by sea, rail, and truck as quickly as possible.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *19 November 1942*. Maj. Art Salisbury, who was shot down west of Tobruk leading his 65th Squadron (57th Group), is back after some exciting desert experiences. He made a belly-landing two miles from the Hun and started out on foot along the coastal road. Within 15 minutes he met the 7th Armored Division, the famous "Desert Rats," coming from the opposite direction. The first night he slept under a scout car. Next day he picked up a German dog, abandoned shell-shocked by the Huns. He named him "Tobruk" and brought him back to his squadron with him.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *20 November 1942*. Benghazi is occupied. Rommel retreated so hastily the Eighth Army has lost contact.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *22 November 1942*. The 98th and 376th Bomb Groups attacked Tripoli, first heavy U. S. Bomber raid on this vital point. One motor vessel was set afire, many hits scored along the water front, and fires started.

Sgt. Burgess Scott, *Yank* correspondent who went on the raid, wrote: "The American raid on Tripoli was the seaport's first aerial attack since the start of the Desert Campaign, and the first U. S. action against the city since the early 1800's when U. S. Marines landed there to curb the activities of the Tripolitanian pirates."

MALTA, *25 November 1942*. Arrived at Malta at 6 A.M. with ACM Tedder and General Timberlake in a B-17. Had luncheon with the Governor General, Lord Gort, and in the afternoon inspected the docks, airfields, and navy yard area. Apparently the enemy had used mainly 1000-lb. bombs against these installations. A great deal of the heavy and irreplaceable machinery, including the power plant, is located in



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the cliffs under 70 feet of solid concrete and undamaged. Inspection of the airfields was a liberal education for an air force officer. The manner in which the ground defenses, including concealment and pens for aircraft, are worked out is a lesson for all. The headquarters occupies space underground which is literally dug out of rock.

Malta's main problem is food. The starvation diet they have been on for six months has taken its toll. The laborers have to have long periods of rest and layoffs because they cannot work hard on their rations. The magnitude of the rationing problem can be understood when it's realized that Malta, which has approximately 100 square miles, is populated at a density of 2400 people per square mile. Despite all difficulties, the RAF is operating approximately 300 aircraft from the island.

ALGIERS, *27 November 1942.* Landed at Maison Blanche airfield, which has been attacked by the enemy every clear day for the past 10 days. Algiers is a lovely city, but in its present aspect very sad. Streets and boulevards are wide and handsome. Most of the shops are closed, as they have had no imports from France for two years and the whole area has been drained of resources.

Conference with General Eisenhower at which the strategic plan of employment was given. He exercises the dual functions of Allied commander in North Africa and commander of American Army Forces in the United Kingdom. He has authority to divert from England such air forces as he requires in North Africa. His plan of employment contemplates the movement from one theater to another of heavy bombers when requirements may indicate their need in one place or the other. Weather conditions are such that it may be possible to operate from North Africa when operations from England must be held to a minimum because of weather.



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CAIRO, *28 November 1942.* I was pleased, on my return from Malta and Algiers, to learn how our men spent Thanksgiving. There were church services in most units, with chaplains praying earnestly "for the safety of our men and for God's blessing in our righteous struggle against a tyrannical foe." For Thanksgiving dinner our men from Syria to Cyrenaica received a pound of top-grade American turkey each, plus fresh frozen peas, corn, and all the fixings. The Quartermaster Corps' feat in getting frozen prime turkeys from Texas, along with fresh vegetables, to the deserts of Africa is something that never happened before in war.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *5 December 1942.* Lieut. Col. C. V. ("Sonny") Whitney, who has been serving on the staff of the Desert Task Force, came to luncheon. As a result of his desert experiences, he has cabled his trainer at home to name six of his colts "Jeep," "Tobruk," "Signals Bloke," "Benghazi," "Petrol Point," and "Good Show." He laughed about the people who will lose their money betting on his horses by associating them with their own experiences in Africa.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *8 December 1942.* During the past 10 days the main task of the Ninth Air Force was working out plans to move the heavies, mediums, and fighters closer to the front and carrying supplies to the Eighth Army and RAF in the Benghazi area. On 2 December AM Coningham and I conferred at Benghazi about the Eighth Army's gas shortage. The 316th Troop Carrier Group was put on this job. It wasn't long before C-47s were maintaining a "flying pipeline" right up to the front. On one day 49 C-47s carried 48,510 gallons of gas from El Adem to Ajedabia, a distance of 425 miles by truck and 250 by aircraft. The flight was completed in an hour and 50 minutes. It would have been a 3-day trip for 59 trucks.

The heavies attacked Tripoli harbor on 29 November, sank three ships, and did extensive damage to port facilities. On 4 December Liberators of the 98th and 376th Groups



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attacked Naples harbor, dropping 110,000 pounds of bombs on the Italian Navy. Observers on the Naples raid reported hits on a battleship and two cruisers and damage to the docks and railway yards. It was the first attack by U. S. forces on the Italian mainland, and congratulations were received from all sides. Rommel's supplies were now to be stopped at their source. British intelligence reported: "The key to Rommel's defenses at El Agheila lies in the struggle both sides are waging for supplies and reinforcements. Air supremacy will decide, and in Libya the Axis is definitely the underdog."

The problem of supply was all-consuming in the desert. No commander could make a move or plan even a local skirmish without considering logistics. The best description of what the desert was like for a battleground is that given by a captured German tank commander, General von Ravenstein: "The desert is a tactician's paradise, but a quartermaster's hell!"

CAIRO, EGYPT, *9 December 1942.* The 57th Group returned to action. They engaged enemy planes over "Marble Arch" and shot down 7 Me-109s and damaged five.

ALGIERS, *10–11–12 December 1942.* The general situation in Tunisia has not changed fundamentally since my previous visit two weeks ago. General Eisenhower feels that if a sufficiently strong drive cannot be instituted this month the reduction of the Axis bridgehead and the occupation of the Tunis-Bizerte area may be a question of weeks or even months.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *13 December 1942.* El Agheila was occupied yesterday by the Eighth Army.

The extent of Rommel's losses, both in personnel and in equipment, was clearly shown by his withdrawal from El Agheila two days prior to the contemplated British attack. The comparative strength of the two forces at El Agheila was approximately 25,000 Axis to 40,000 British.



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Rommel's supply problem is becoming more acute. Four-fifths of all shipping sent to Tripoli in the first two weeks of December was destroyed by the air forces and submarines—and Tripoli is 400 miles to the west, and the roads over which his supplies had to travel were worked over almost daily by our aircraft. Up to the fall of El Agheila the heavies and mediums of the Ninth Air Force flew 1,621 sorties and dropped 2,632 tons on the enemy. The 57th Fighter Group destroyed 52 planes, probably destroyed and damaged 37.

Many of the men who made these efforts possible lived strange lives in the desert. Gambut, advance base for the heavies, was perhaps the lonesomest place. When the heavies moved up from the Suez Canal zone and began hitting Tripoli and Italy, they flew to Gambut, refueled, and took off for their target the next day or night. Most maps don't show Gambut, and I never knew how it got a name because it consists of exactly one blockhouse. Neighbors of the Ninth Air Force at this desolate spot were nomadic Senousi Bedouins and goats. The men bartered with the Senousi for eggs, and this is no simple pastime. It requires an art all its own, especially after the Senousi found out how much the Americans hated dried eggs and how much they'd give for fresh eggs. About the only other amusement on off days was souvenir-hunting for items left behind by the Jerries and Eyeties when they occupied these same fields.

But when the Liberators came roaring in from the east, life hummed at Gambut. Oil bowsers drove out to the line, ambulances took their places in front of the operation's tent, and the cooks turned on the heat in their field ranges. Tents were made ready for the visiting crewmen, and soon the place was swarming with pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and gunners in their leather flying suits. Usually the combat crews brought up the mail for their buddies in the advanced detachment along with the latest "poop" from the Delta. It was a great day when the B-24s came back in daylight flying in tight formation low over the field, signaling success of the mission. The crews would get hot coffee and Spam sand-



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wiches at the cook tent before reporting to the intelligence tent for interrogation. Then they boarded their ships and flew back to their home base, and Gambut became a deserted desert outpost again.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *25 December 1942.* There were no combat operations on Christmas. Men in the desert had turkey from home, and some had wine bought in Cairo and hoarded for the occasion. There were the usual chapel services for all religions. In the 38th General Hospital at Kilo Thirteen, they had a Christmas tree in every ward and a big dinner for all who could eat it.

CAIRO, EGYPT, *31 December 1942.* During most of December, Rommel continued his retreat back to Buerat, which he reached on 26 December. The Eighth Army also had to slow up because of mine fields and the necessity of reorganizing supply lines. On 29 December we made our second raid on Tunisia, following up the first attack against the railway repair yards at Sfax on 15 December. Liberators of Colonel Timberlake's 93rd Group hit three ships, causing an explosion on one, in addition to damage to the docks and railway yards at Sousse.

CAIRO, *1 January 1943.* Fifteen Liberators of the 98th Group dumped high explosives on Axis shipping in the harbor of Tunis, damaging the turning basin and a nearby railway junction.

CAIRO, *2 January 1943.* Liberators of the 376th Group and Mitchells of the 12th Group combined to hit Heraklion airfield on Crete, whose planes had been attacking our supply lines along the coastal route. The Liberators attacked first and covered the field with bomb bursts. The Mitchells, following the heavies in, attacked the dispersal areas. Approximately 20 fighters and several bombers were destroyed on the ground, and the airfield was badly damaged. On the



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way home two Mitchells had to ditch in the Mediterranean. British air-sea rescue, using an American-built launch, saved both crews.

CAIRO, *4 January 1943.* Operational fatigue is evident among our combat crews. I emphasized to the Group Commanders that there was no such thing as a poor organization —that (to paraphrase Napoleon) "there are only poor leaders."

Received the sad news of Lady Tedder's fatal aircraft accident. I feel sorrier than I can say for AM Tedder, with whom I have become very intimate in a personal as well as official way during the past six months. I am very fond of Tedder. I soon learned that he had given a great deal of thought to strategic bombing. Most of our official business concerned heavy bomber operations and I found out that quite often he and I were thinking along identical lines on operations and tactics. His conduct of a conference is enlightening. He allows no extraneous discussion. He has a calm way about him and encourages clarity on the part of others because of his simple manner of doing things. Soon after meeting him I noticed that he liked to discuss important business informally. The most important talks I had with him were not at the commanders' meeting but privately. Whenever he suggested I come over to see him, I knew that something important was in the offing.

CAIRO, *23 January 1943.* From El Agheila to Tripoli there were no major engagements fought. Pressed by the Eighth Army, Rommel was unable to organize the Buerat position for more than another delaying action. For three days prior to the start of the advance on Buerat on 15 January, a continuous air offensive was carried out against airfields, harbors, and communication lines. The main target of mediums was Bir Dufan airfield, base for over a hundred German and Italian planes. Transport and troop concentrations in the Ghedahia area were bombed and strafed by the 57th Group



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and RAF Spitfires. The heavies attacked Tauroga, Churgia, and Misurata, as well as port and road junctions of Tripoli itself.

The British advance began when the 2nd New Zealand Division and the 7th Armored Division crossed the Ghedahia-Bu Ngum track 30 miles southwest of Buerat. On 16 January the enemy started to withdraw. A week later, on 23 January, Tripoli fell—exactly three months after the start of the battle of El Alamein. Mussolini's African Empire had crumbled.

In coming in to the airfield at Marble Arch, a C-47 of the 316th Troop Carrier Group, landing immediately in front of my plane, struck a land mine and was destroyed. The transport was loaded with 16 wounded from the Eighth Army, but fortunately there were no serious injuries. Later that night, at Western Desert Air Force headquarters, Stukas attacked and three 500-lb. bombs landed close enough to our caravan to completely destroy General Strickland's clothes and to put several bomb fragments in my mobile van.

CAIRO, *25 January 1943.* General Andrews has returned from Casablanca, where he attended the 10-day conference of the President, the Prime Minister, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff. A decision was reached regarding the invasion of Sicily, which will affect the employment of the Ninth Air Force.

CAIRO, *30 January 1943.* After the Casablanca conference, Gen. Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General of the Air Forces, Gen. Brehon B. Somervell, Commanding General of the Services of Supply, General Spaatz, and Gen. Sir John Dill of the British General Staff came to Cairo. Tedder has been named Air Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean area, and his old Middle East job taken by ACM Sholto Douglas, out from England. General Andrews has been ordered to London to assume command of all American troops in England. General Arnold made a personal tour of the advance Libyan bases. At one of the landing grounds, General Arnold



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asked a pair of bedraggled and unshaven fliers where they had been.

"Over Palermo," replied the pilot, not recognizing General Arnold—one of the last persons he expected to see out on the barren, windswept desert. Then, recognizing the Chief of the Air Forces, the pilot reddened and said: "Just got in, Sir! Haven't had time to clean up."

Waving aside the apology, General Arnold asked a stream of questions: Was their oxygen equipment okay? How were the guns working? What did they think of the bomb sight? Were their planes satisfactory, and if not why not? How did they like the B-24?

The answer to the last question was: "All we want is more."

The word spread that "Hap" Arnold, the Boss, was paying them a visit. The little group grew into a crowd. Soon General Arnold was telling them about the new equipment on the way—the new planes, bombs, and guns. He explained why they didn't get everything they wanted and why some things weren't as good as they should be. This visit by the man all the air forces look to as their leader was a great contribution to morale. At this time the morale of the heavy bomber crews was a cause for concern because of long, difficult missions and lack of replacements.

CAIRO, *31 January 1943.* Received instructions from the President designating me Commander, U. S. Army Forces, Middle East, replacing General Andrews who departed this morning for England. I also retain command of the Ninth Air Force, thus serving in a dual capacity.

CAIRO, *18 February 1943.* After being refitted, reorganized, and rested, the Eighth Army moved on for an anticipated junction with the American forces in Tunisia. By this date Montgomery's forces established themselves in Medinine facing the Mareth Line, where Rommel was preparing for a determined stand. A week earlier the Allied command had



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been reorganized with General Eisenhower promoted to a four-star General and given command of all forces in North Africa including the British Eighth Army. General Alexander was made his deputy.

HQS. WESTERN DESERT AIR FORCE, *19 February 1943*. The Ninth Air Force had its share in destroying the Luftwaffe and the Regia Aeronautica. Intelligence officers estimated that 1,100 planes were abandoned or wrecked on the airfields from El Alamein to Tripoli.

Keen rivalry existed among the three squadrons of the 57th Fighter Group: the "Fighting Cocks," so called because they had brought a gamecock mascot with them from the States; the "Black Scorpions," who got their name when a sergeant found one of the deadly spiders in his bedroll; and the "Exterminators," whose name evolved from Squadron X. The 57th was full of fun as well as fight. Once I saw a "Keep off the Grass" sign on a plot of desert sand ten feet square that they had roped off. Another one of their sign posts was: "Los Angeles City Limits." A cat named "Zuara Zue," who had her own box, mess gear, and blanket, was a pet of the Black Scorpions. The Exterminators had two captured Italian planes that they somehow lugged around with them—*The Green Goose* (a Savoia bomber) and a Macchi-200 fighter. They hoped to convert *The Green Goose* into a flying store for hops to Cairo to replenish their stores, but the Eyetie bomber had a motor that persisted in catching afire whenever the plane was in flight. Luckily, the *Goose* was a metal job.

BASRA, IRAQ, *1 March 1943*. Flew here to inspect the Persian Gulf Command, through which passes the bulk of the Lend-Lease aid to Russia, bringing along a party of correspondents: Leon Kay (UP), Tex O'Reilly *(New York Herald Tribune)*, George Tucker (AP), and Mr. Perrino of the OWI. In view of the recent official Russian announcement concerning the unsatisfactory amount of Lend-Lease being



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received, the correspondents should be able to see for themselves what we are furnishing and get some timely stories.

ABADAN, IRAN, 2 *March 1943.* Abadan and Khurramshar, the main debarking and staging area for the Persian Gulf Command, are swamped with American equipment. In some cases so much is arriving that the personnel is unable to handle it. At Abadan 130 aircraft were waiting to be flown north because bad weather the past five days at Teheran had prevented incoming flights. Fighter planes have been arriving so fast during the past two months that the somewhat limited personnel has been seriously overloaded. This was caused by the fact that 180 planes arrived for final assembly without previous notice. Among the heavy equipment being unloaded at Khurramshar were eight 1,000-hp. Diesel locomotives and a considerable amount of heavy rails and railway cars. The Russians seemed impressed by this.

The aircraft furnished to Russia in the past three months include mostly P-39 and P-40 fighters and A-20 light bombers. I talked with Colonel Obrazov, the Russian commanding officer, and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Pomorkin, and they were unable to answer the question why the Russians preferred the P-39 to the P-40 since they have had very little combat experience with the latter. Their preference may lie in the fact that the P-39 has the .37-mm. cannon in its nose, giving it increased firepower over the P-40s' .50-caliber machine guns. In general, the Russians seem contented with the condition of the aircraft and equipment.

CAIRO, 5 *March 1943.* Tactical operations of the Bomber Command, which has moved to Benghazi, were suspended for seven days in order to combine a badly needed rest and with a refresher in rendezvous, precision bombing, and night operations.

BENGHAZI, LIBYA, 11 *March 1943.* Observed a tactical exercise by the 98th and 376th Groups, which attacked a



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small island 50 miles off the coast of Benghazi. The exercise was unsatisfactory—straggling was serious, the bombing was inaccurate, and the time over the target was too long. A critique was held with Colonels Rush, Ent, Compton, and Kane, and the exercise ordered repeated. From now on we must continue training along with combat operations. We have big jobs coming up.

TRIPOLI, *12 March 1943*. Rommel's reinforced army was now aligned in hill positions among the old French defenses behind the Mareth Line. His total forces were estimated at 100,000 men, 700 guns, and 200 tanks. Always favoring the offensive, Rommel decided to attack, and on the morning of 6 March a three-pronged tank thrust was launched from Toujane and Hallouf and down the Mareth-Medenine road. The Eighth Army, with 187,000 seasoned veterans and 473 tanks, completely repulsed the attacks by midday of 7 March. Fifty-two enemy tanks were destroyed. Rommel's star was blinking its last.

Rommel's tactics were a striking parallel to those he used at El Alamein. In both cases:

(1) He sensed that time was favoring the Eighth Army;

(2) He clung to the doctrine of the offensive, which prompted bold action before the Eighth Army could receive more reinforcements and supplies;

(3) The Axis infantry was centered in a holding position to meet any possible counterattack;

(4) The Axis armor was utilized in a close southern enveloping attack with two tank columns driving east, then northeast.

This is interesting because it has been General Montgomery's contention all along that Rommel, while a brilliant field leader, constantly repeats himself in all his engagements.[8]

[8] LATER: As events turned out, this was Rommel's last desert offensive. It was learned shortly afterwards that he had been recalled to Berlin, supposedly on sick leave.



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CAIRO, *18 March 1943.* At a meeting of the Defense Committee discussed the development of the plans for Operation HUSKY, the code name for the invasion of Sicily. The Ninth Air Force will team with the Twelfth Air Force to soften up Sicily before the landings.

TRIPOLI, *24 March 1943.* There was a full moon on 20 March, and Montgomery chose this period to attack the Mareth Line in force. His plan called for a right jab and a left hook. The right jab was blocked when a heavy rainstorm fell at a critical period in the battle, flooding the dry bed of the Wadi Zig Zaw over which the British had to take their armor. Preceding the left hook, a strong air attack was launched against the enemy. The Mitchells and Baltimores attacked first; then the P-40s and Spitfires, flying in flights of four, followed up. They had orders to stay over the 21st Panzer division and the 164th Light and Spezzia divisions in 15-minute shifts, bombing and strafing everything in sight. Smoke shells were fired, giving the pilots a bombline beyond which they were free to hit anything that moved. At some places they bombed only 200 yards ahead of our troops. The entire attack lasted almost three hours, with the fighter-bombers coming shuttling back and forth to refuel and re-bomb. Damage to the Hun's gun positions and fixed defenses was terrific. It was the greatest example of air-ground co-operation in the desert. When the air attacks ended, General Freyberg's New Zealanders swung around the southern flank and moved into the open ground in the rear of the enemy's defenses. The Mareth Line had been cracked.

CAIRO, *31 March 1943.* Absence of the Luftwaffe over the battlefield areas did not mean that our fliers were immune from attack. Our low-flying fighters, who dived and strafed the enemy's gun positions, troop and tank concentrations, and supply lines, invariably had to fly through a hail of ack ack fire. Many of them were shot down and a lot of these crash-landed or parachuted to safety. They came straggling



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in from the desert, often from behind enemy lines. The RAF started a club called "Late Arrivals" for these pilots who made their way back, and their emblem was the "flying boot," a silver boot with wings attached to the heels. Some of our boys who qualified to wear the "flying boot" were Lieuts. Arlie Clayton, Dale Deniston, William R. Campbell, Adrian K. Stahl, Thomas T. Williams, and Walter H. Reed, and Majs. Art Salisbury, Archie Knight, and R. F. Worley.

CAIRO, *3 April 1943*. Operations reports were received on yesterday's low-level heavy bomber attacks on the Italian Chemical works at Crotone, Italy, and the ferry terminals at Messina, Sicily, and San Giovanni, Italy, through which supplies flow to Sicily and Africa after moving down to the toe of Italy's boot. Lieut. Norman C. Appold and a volunteer crew made the attack on Crotone from less than 100 feet, catching the defenses completely by surprise in the early morning dawn. The ferry terminal attacks were led by Lieuts. Brian W. Flavelle and Jerome Dufour. All men who participated were volunteers even though they knew that flying a Liberator into such well-defended targets at zero altitude is extremely hazardous.

CAIRO, *9 April 1943*. AVM Coryton conferred with me on the project of bombing the Rumanian oilfields. This subject is again being agitated in London. I stated that I did not approve of the project at this time because it would divert power from the main objective in support of the Tunisian battle and HUSKY Operation. Discussed with ACM Douglas the detailed plans for the Rumanian operation. I told him that we were prepared to put it on but repeated that I was strongly opposed at this time. He agreed and is sending a message to Whitehall.

CAIRO, *10 April 1943*. The Eighth Army stormed the Axis Line at Akarit on 6 April, and on the next day the position was carried and strong counterattacks repulsed. The



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change of strategy for the Battle of Akarit is worthy of mention. At El Alamein, the RAF and Ninth Air Force plastered the enemy in a 5-day preliminary air preparation. At Akarit, however, without forewarning, the attack was launched by infantrymen of the 4th Indian Division and the 51st Highlanders. They advanced under cover of darkness just before daybreak with bayonets fixed. It was only after the first objective had been taken that the artillery opened on the second line of defense. Under protection of this barrage, the infantry advanced and captured the second objective. The air force was used extensively for strafing. Each time the enemy tried to mass his tanks for a counterattack they were hit hard from the air.

TRIPOLI, *18 April 1943*. Received an urgent call to come to Constantine for a commanders' meeting on Operation HUSKY. On arrival here, found Archbishop Francis J. Spellman[9] who was an overnight guest of General Strickland. Archbishop Spellman, in addition to being the personal representative of the President, has been appointed Vicar of all American Armed Forces.

CONSTANTINE, ALGERIA, *19 April 1943*. Discussions among the Air Commanders for air plans for Operation HUSKY confirmed the fact that all units in the Desert Air Task Force will be transferred to the North Africa Air Force for the operation.

EL DJEM, TUNISIA, *20-21-22 April 1943*. While in Constantine I heard about the brilliant feat of the 57th Group in intercepting a flight of more than 100 Ju-52 transport planes escorted by upwards of 50 Me-109s and 110s, flying in formation off Cape Bon two days previously. Forty-six P-40s, with RAF Spitfires for top cover, swept down on the formation, and when the guns stopped blazing the score stood 58 Ju-52s,

[9] LATER: Now Cardinal Spellman.



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14 Me-109s, and 4 Me-110s destroyed, plus 29 Ju-52s, Me-109s, and Me-110s damaged.

By the time I arrived at the 57th Group the boys were calling it the "Palm Sunday Massacre." With Spitfires engaging the Nazi fighters above, the Warhawks had slaughtered the lumbering three-engined German transports down below. Some planes blew up in the air, while others dived into the sea and onto the Cape Bon beaches. Eighty percent of the planes were flamers and at one spot the water beneath became a sea of fire.

The interception of the German transports was no accident. Intelligence had been observing the air shuttle service across the Mediterranean for some time and they had been waiting for the right time to bounce the slow-moving transports.

Four new Ninth Air Force aces came out of the battle: Lieut. Richard E. Duffey, Walled Lake, Michigan, who shot down five Ju-52s; Lieut. McArthur Powers, Inwood, New York, who shot down four Ju-52s and one Me-109; Capt. Roy E. Whitaker, Knoxville, Tennessee, who bagged three Ju-52s and one Me-109; and Capt. James Curl,[10] who destroyed two Ju-52s and an Me-109.

Here is Captain Curl's description of the engagement in the operation's report:

"When I first saw the Jerry planes they were right under us, about 4,000 feet down. Camouflaged as they were with green coloring, it was rather difficult to distinguish the transports against the sea. When they got nearer they looked like a huge flight of geese, for they were traveling in perfect 'V' formation. The boys simply cut loose and shot the daylights out of them. What concerned our pilots was the danger of hitting our own aircraft. The air was filled with whistling and maneuvering planes. There were cases of pilots missing the transport they aimed at and hitting the one behind. It was as fantastic as that—you just could not miss. There was

[10] Later reported missing in action.



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no real fighter opposition. Spitfires, flying top cover, kept the Messerschmitts so busy that they could not interfere with our attacks to any extent."

I was happy to read to the 57th a message of congratulations from General Marshall and to add my own. The attack infuriated the enemy, and for the next two nights they hit back in angry retaliation at the 57th's field. Lieut. Allen H. Smith was killed by a bomb fragment, and seven men were injured. Aircraft, trucks, and trailers were damaged.

CAIRO, *27 April 1943.* Seventy Liberators attacked the Bari, Italy, airdrome and assembly plant yesterday. Colonel Uzal G. Ent, chief of the Bomber Command, led the mission, which was designed to destroy reinforcing fighters being concentrated in Bari for movement to Tunisia. Aerial photographs revealed that over 50 planes were destroyed on the ground in addition to extensive damage to hangars and buildings.

EL DJEM, *7 May 1943.* After the Battle of Akarit, the Eighth Army and the U.S. II Corps, commanded by Lieut. Gen. Omar Bradley, who on 16 April succeeded Lieut. Gen. George Patton, linked up on the Gabes road on 8 April. Pressure was kept on the Axis, and the Eighth Army captured Enfidaville on the night of 19–20 April and then launched a drive to wrest the hill positions from the enemy. By 8 May, Axis positions were collapsing all along the front. British tanks broke through to surprise German soldiers sitting in sidewalk cafés in Tunis, and American motorized units forced their way into Bizerte the same day. Every indication was that all of Tunisia would be captured four or five days before General Montgomery's prediction of 15 May.

CAIRO, *13 May 1943.* Axis resistance in North Africa ended at 11:45 A.M. today after a three-year desert war. General von Arnim, who commanded the Axis forces, was captured along



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with fourteen other German generals and four Italian. The bag included 266,000 prisoners and more than 1,200 guns and 250 German and 100 Italian tanks. Fifteen enemy divisions were wiped out. Although Berlin had ordered a "fight to the last cartridge," the finish was an utter collapse. During the last days the Royal Navy and the Allied air fleets guarded the waters around Tunisia to prevent the enemy from attempting a "Dunkirk." Forty-two ships were sunk between Sicily and Tunisia.

A breakdown on the enemy casualties and prisoners of war since El Alamein is interesting:

| | Prisoners of War | | Killed & |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *German* | *Italian* | Wounded |
| El Alamein to Mareth (144 days) | 8,000 | 24,900 | 30,000 |
| Mareth to Enfidaville (34 days) | 7,000 | 21,000 | 24,500 |
| Enfidaville to Victory (24 days) | 135,000 | 131,000 | 57,000 |
| | 150,000 | 176,900 | 111,500 |

The air contributed a major share in the Axis debacle and on five April days (5th, 10th, 11th, 18th, and 22nd) destroyed 253 transport planes, 232 Ju-52s, and 21 Me-323s (six engines), at a cost of 35 Allied planes. These losses virtually severed the Axis air resupply link from Italy.

With the fall of Tunisia a foregone conclusion, the heavies shifted their attacks to Sicily in early May in preparation for Operation Husky. On 6 May Liberators attacked Reggio di Calabria, where the nail of the big toe would be on Italy's boot, the terminus of the San Giovanni-Messina ferry line to Sicily. Catania harbor was attacked on 11 May, where a tanker exploded and two other ships were damaged. Augusta harbor was the target on 13 May, where a flotilla of seaplanes were damaged, hits scored among 20 motor vessels moored in the harbor, and oil storage tanks fired.



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CAIRO, *15 May 1943.* Humorous happenings are always cropping up to give you a chuckle, though the heavy hand of war usually makes you forget them quickly. Here's one that I shan't forget because it might have been serious. When the "Yacht Club Boys"—first USO unit to come to the Middle East—were touring our bases in a jeep during the wind-up of the campaign in Tunisia, they lost their lead jeep. Jim Brown, at the wheel, stepped on it to catch up. Artillery fire was overhead but they kept going. Suddenly ahead they saw troops in uniforms of the wrong color. Some say they set the desert jeep record, reversing their field.

CAIRO, *28 May 1943.* General Marshall accompanied Mr. Churchill to Algiers after the close of a 10-day conference in Washington with the President and combined Chiefs of Staff.[11]

CAIRO, *1 June 1943.* Complied with ACM Tedder's request for General Strickland's services in North Africa. He will become military governor of the Italian island of Pantelleria, which will be bombed into submission along with several other small islands that lie between Tunisia and Sicily.

Whenever I am asked how the British and Americans get along, as I am frequently asked by correspondents and various other people who drift through Cairo, I recall the Strickland-Coningham answer. I don't know which one originated it. Their stories are the same but sound differently according to which man is talking—Strickland in his Alabama drawl, or Coningham in his combination British-New Zealand accent. Here is the Coningham version; and it just about answers the question:

"Along about nineish Strickland toddles over to my tent in the desert and I inquire: 'How are you this lovely morning, old boy?' He says: 'Ripping, old chap.' And I say: 'What

[11] LATER: It was at this meeting that the decisions were made to bomb Rome and to attack the Ploesti oil refineries.



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about a spot of gin?' Strickland answers: 'Naturally, old topper.' I produce a bottle of gin, and he produces a can of grapefruit juice. That's how the British and the Americans get along."

Benghazi, Libya, *8 June 1943.* Discussed with General Ent air operations for Operation HUSKY, and the special Operation SOAPSUDS, code name for an attack on the Ploesti (Rumania) oil refineries. Awarded the American Distinguished Flying Cross to Wing Commander Billy Drake, commander of the famous "Shark" Kittyhawk squadron in the desert. On the same order Maj. E. C. Saville, D.F.C. and bar, of the South African Air Force, was awarded the American Distinguished Flying Cross. Major Saville commanded the RAF Spitfire squadron which flew top-cover for the 57th Group on the "Palm Sunday Massacre" of Ju-52s off Cape Bon.

Cairo, *11 June 1943.* Message from ACM Tedder concerning Operation SOAPSUDS. It will be mounted from the Middle East, and three more heavy groups are enroute to join the Ninth Air Force. In view of the fact that these units will arrive without ground echelons, 1,100 personnel are being detached from the Delta Base area to reinforce the bomber command. The RAF will furnish six additional flights to provide local security.

Cairo, *13 June 1943.* The air assault on Pantelleria, beginning on 30 May, caused the Italian island of 11,500 population to surrender on 11 June. It was the first complete surrender in history to air attack without ground action. On 12 June, Lampedusa succumbed to air attacks, and the following day Linosa also surrendered. Capture of these islands gave Allied seapower complete control of the sea lanes to Sicily and Italy.



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CAIRO, *15 June 1943*. Thirty-nine Italian parachutists dropped in the Benghazi area last night. They brought along radio sets to transmit messages back to Italy, but most of these were broken in the landings. Their mission was to destroy planes of the Ninth Air Force. First news of the parachutists came from an Arab who reported to the Bomber Command that two of the Eyeties had already been slain by natives. The mission was very poorly organized and executed. Some of the Eyeties started looking for somebody to give up to as soon as they landed.[12]

CAIRO, *25 June 1943*. Joint conference with the RAF, at which ACM Douglas presided, for further discussion of Operations HUSKY and SOAPSUDS. The staff for the task force for these two operations was set up as follows:

Myself as commander; General Ent as Chief of Staff; Col. Jacob E. Smart from General Arnold's office in Washington and Col. Edward J. Timberlake and Col. Claire Stroh plus two RAF members as operational and planning staff.

CAIRO, *29 June 1943*. Information received that the 93rd Group, commanded by Lieut. Col. Addison Baker, has arrived from England. The 44th Group, commanded by my old friend Col. Leon Johnson, who served with me at Barksdale Field, La., and Savannah, Ga., also has arrived. In the evening a pleasant dinner on the Continental Hotel roof with Frank Lynch of General Motors, Quentin Reynolds and Frank Gervasi, *Collier's* staff writers. Mr. Reynolds gave an interesting account of the Dieppe raid, in which he participated. He is an accomplished conversationalist and story-teller.

[12] LATER: Interrogation of the captured parachutists revealed that seven Groups, all Italians, were dropped in the North African area. An air photograph of the Oulmene Landing Ground was found on the group landed at Ain Beida. Since this field is nonoperational, it appears that the Italian intelligence is somewhat out of date. When the parachutists completed their mission, they were told to surrender without resistance.



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CAIRO, *1 July 1943*. Conference of the planning staff on Operation TIDAL WAVE, new code name for the Ploesti oil-refinery attacks replacing the original name SOAPSUDS. At a meeting of the entire joint-planning staff, Mr. Barthaud, head of the Petroleum branch of the Economic Warfare Ministry in London, presented a complete survey of the oil situation and made general recommendations on destroying oil production at Ploesti. It was as a result of his suggestion that Lieut. Col. W. L. Forster of the British Army, who is intimately acquainted with the Ploesti oil refineries, having worked there before the war, was requested from Washington.

CAIRO, *4 July 1943*. The press of military affairs required me to fly to Tunis and prevented me from indulging in the Independence Day celebration at the Gezira Sporting Club, where the Ninth Air Force Public Relations section tangled with the War Correspondents in a baseball game. The PROs somehow won, which makes them much better at Public Relations. I was invited to umpire but had my chief of staff, Gen. Vic Strahm, sub for me. Sgt. Nathan Glick, taking advantage of the good old American custom of berating the umpire, hung a sign around General Strahm's neck which read: "I am blind." He is a brave sergeant. The War Correspondents had quite a distinguished list of players, including Quentin Reynolds of *Collier's*; Harry Zinder of *Time* and *Life*; George Tucker of AP; Joel Sayre, of the *New Yorker* magazine, and a Britisher; Norman Smart of the *London Daily Express,* an Australian; and Peter Duffield of the *London Evening Standard,* who joined in the fun. I understand that the war correspondents tried every trick to win, even running in a ringer, Tom Gorman of the New York Giants. There's one thing about Americans—they always find some way to stir up excitement wherever they go.

TUNIS, TUNISIA, *5 July 1943*. Presented my plan of employment for Operation TIDAL WAVE to the Mediter-



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ranean Air Command which was accepted without any alteration.

BENGHAZI, LIBYA, *6 July 1943*. Conference on Operation TIDAL WAVE with General Ent, the Bomber Command staff, and all the heavy group commanders—Col. John ("Killer") Kane of the 98th, Col. Keith K. Compton of the 376th, Col. Leon Johnson of the 44th, Col. Jack Woods of the 389th, and Lieut. Col. Addison Baker of the 93rd. I announced my decisions. It would be a low-level, horizontal bombing attack during daylight hours. This kind of attack required a decided change in technique for the Liberators. The 98th and 397th Groups had carried out several three-plane low-level attacks against Italian targets, but here they were faced with an entirely different problem. I knew that the Liberator was definitely not suited for a low-level attack, but I felt that the surprise element would weigh heavily in our favor. It was necessary to assure the heaviest possible damage in the first attack. Because of the long distance involved, over 2,000 miles, and the danger of bad weather, I felt that our formations might get dispersed and not hit the target so effectively from a high altitude as they would in a low-level attack. After receiving the target folders I studied them for two weeks before making up my mind on the low-level attack. I invited no discussion whatsoever among the commanders. While I do not believe there was a single commander who would have not preferred a high-altitude attack, the decision was accepted by all. I emphasized that the success of the mission depended almost entirely on the Group Commanders. I stressed the necessity for absolute ruthlessness in the immediate relief of any Commander who at any time during the training period showed lack of leadership, of aggressiveness, or of complete confidence. The importance of the Ploesti refineries, which were estimated to produce at least 35 percent of the Axis oil, called for the utmost in daring. I directed that the training program be submitted to me on my return three days hence. It was estimated that



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it would take three weeks' training to get the force ready for the operation.

BENGHAZI, *9 July 1943.* Arrived in time to attend the 376th Group's interrogation of the crews who attacked the German headquarters at Taormina, Sicily. At least ten direct hits were made on the old San Domenico Hotel. Last-minute intelligence informed us that the San Domenico Hotel housed the headquarters for the German forces in Sicily and also was a communication center. No target information was available, and it was necessary to have a picture of the hotel flown in the night before. Beginning 5 July, we bombed Messina, Gerbini, Catania, Comiso, and Gela, concentrating mainly on airfields, but including marshaling yards, a telegraph and telephone building, and industrial areas.

BENGHAZI, *10 July 1943.* This is D-Day for Operation HUSKY. Last night the 82nd airborne division, in C-47 planes and gliders, landed in the enemy's rear to seize enemy airfields. Unfortunately they were scattered many miles from their targets, so had to alter their plan and operate against enemy communications and other targets of opportunity. The invasion force of approximately 160,000 men was mounted in Tunisia, Tripoli, Tobruk, and Egypt for the invasion of Sicily, and sailed across the Mediterranean in over 3,000 vessels. Their ultimate mission is to drive the enemy from Sicily and establish bases from which to carry out further operations against Italy. The 15th Army Group, under command of General Alexander, and composed of the British Eighth Army commanded by General Montgomery and the U.S. Seventh Army commanded by Lieut. Gen. George Patton, was charged with executing Operation HUSKY. Approximately 4,000 aircraft from the RAF, the Twelfth, and the Ninth Air Forces operated against Sicily throughout D-minus-1 and D-day, rendering the Axis air resistance negligible.



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CAIRO, *17 July 1943.* Conference with Lieutenant Colonel Forster of the British Army, who has arrived from Washington where he has been serving on the Petroleum Board as a representative of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare. He will be on the planning staff for Operation TIDAL WAVE.

In addition to the daily attacks on Sicilian targets, the heavies bombed Naples today with a force of 75 Liberators. Huge fires were started in oil-storage dumps and hits made on marshaling yards, railroad storage depot, and locomotive shops. Axis fighters reacted savagely, and concerted and prolonged attacks were made on the Liberators. Twenty-one enemy fighters were shot down and seven others probably destroyed. One Liberator was lost.

CAIRO, *19 July 1943.* The first air attack in history on Rome was made today in accordance with decisions made by the President and the Prime Minister at their Washington conference. It was a combined attack of the 12th Air Force's Fortresses and Marauders, operating from bases in Tunisia and Pantelleria, and the Ninth Air Force's Liberators, operating from Benghazi. The Ninth's target was the Littorio marshaling yards, a huge hourglass-shaped network of railroad tracks through which flowed all the rail traffic from Germany and northern Italy to the southern area. The yards cover an area 400 yards by two miles on the northern edge of the city and are capable of handling 3,000 carloads of freight a day. The airdrome which separates the yards from the River Tiber was also a target. The 12th's target was the San Lorenzo marshaling yards in another part of the city.

Every precaution was taken to safeguard religious and cultural shrines in Rome. Special instructions were given crews for a week, and huge enlargements of aerial maps of Rome were studied. On these maps all shrines, monuments, and historic buildings were marked with bright red squares and the warning words: "MUST NOT BE HARMED." Bombardiers were instructed that if there was any doubt about where their bombs would land they were not to release them. Be-



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fore the raid, crew members of Catholic faith were given an opportunity to withdraw from the raid. I asked General Ent to give me a report if anybody withdrew, but nothing ever came to my attention.

The day before and on the morning of the raid, thousands of leaflets were dropped over the city telling the populace that the attack was coming at noon 19 July and warning them to seek shelter. The Allies boldly telegraphed their punch and then made it good. This was extremely good psychology, giving the Italians in Rome a first-hand demonstration of our airpower and our ability to call our shots in advance.

In briefing the crews, General Ent said: "Remember that these military objectives are sandwiched in between some of the most sacred and historically important spots on earth. Above everything else, you must be accurate. Fly low if you must, engage enemy fighters to the best of your ability. Regardless of what you find over the target area, take your time and bomb accurately." The round trip to Rome covered almost 2,000 miles, and the Liberators, as they came in, could see Fortresses leaving their target for the return to Tunisia. A total of 521 planes participated, 272 heavies and 249 mediums.

BENGHAZI, *20–21 July 1943.* Conference with the TIDAL WAVE planning staff at which the commander, deputy commander, group leaders, and group deputy leaders were designated by name. Only those whose military duties required them to have knowledge of the operation were briefed. The crews were not to be told what the target was until D minus 1. Outside of General Ent and his chief of staff, Col. Richard Sanders, only a few people in operations and intelligence were briefed. In order to maintain the tightest possible security, a separate building was constructed at the Bomber Command's headquarters for the TIDAL WAVE planning staff. MPs were on duty 24 hours and no one was allowed to enter who was not actively concerned with the operation.



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When we were well into our training it was possible for anyone in the Benghazi area to deduce that we were going to make a low-level attack because Liberators were skimming over the desert at zero altitude every day. Target practice was held in low altitude horizontal bombing, and, in addition, frequent rehearsals for the mission were held with attacks on a complete layout of the target area, reproduced to full scale in the desert. The assembly points and the I. P.s (initial points) were constructed in order that the crews would be thoroughly familiar with the position of the targets relative to their identification points.

In addition to the full-scale mock-up of Ploesti in the desert, a table-top replica of the city and oil refineries was constructed for the navigators, bombardiers, and pilots to study. Films of Ploesti and the surrounding country were used for briefing the flight leaders and navigators.

CAIRO, *22 July 1943*. Reconnaissance reports of the Rome raid show it was an unqualified success. The Littorio railway yards were left a shambles of twisted rails and gaping craters, and wreckage of rolling stock was strewn everywhere. The railroad administration building was set afire and the roundhouse blown up. An ammunition train moving through the yards was hit and exploded in a series of blasts that added to the destruction. Fires were started in the airdrome adjoining, and three planes destroyed on the ground. The Axis has loosed a storm of protest, and all radio stations on the Continent beamed to Africa and the U.S. are carrying bitter propaganda against the "heathen Allies." The Italian communiqué claimed that 11 buildings "sacred to faith and science were heavily hit," among them the San Lorenzo Basilica. Rome radio claimed that 717 persons were killed and 1,599 injured.

TUNIS, *26 July 1943*. Conferences were held with Colonels Curtis LeMay and Hughes from the Eighth Air Force on the coördination of the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces for Opera-



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tion JUGGLER—code name for attacks on the Messerschmitt Airframe works at Wiener-Neustadt near Vienna. The time of the attack must be determined by the Eighth Air Force because of the uncertain weather conditions in England.

In a conference with ACM Tedder and General Spaatz about the forthcoming operations, Tedder indicated that he was in favor of postponing or cancelling TIDAL WAVE. Tedder's idea was that in view of the Italian political situation and Mussolini's resignation (ousted as Prime Minister by the King yesterday) the Central European objectives have assumed a much higher priority. I opposed Tedder's view because I believed that the Ploesti refineries are more important to the Axis war effort than the Messerschmitt factory, and because training has almost been completed for TIDAL WAVE and to call it off now would seriously impair the morale of the entire Bomber Command. The reason for the attack on the Messerschmitt factory is the fact that German fighter production has increased enormously in the last few months. The increase has been such that daytime bomber attacks from England have virtually reached the point of uneconomical operations as compared with the results obtained. If the situation continues, it may become necessary to divert all bomber attacks to enemy air factories and installations in order to reëstablish an unquestioned air superiority.

It was decided that Operation JUGGLER would follow Ploesti, after which the Ninth Air Force would revert to its mission of completing TIDAL WAVE. Because of the time that will elapse, all element of surprise will be gone, so the rest of the TIDAL WAVE operation will be at high level. Best planning indicates that it will take a minimum of eight attacks with an average strength of 136 bombers to complete the job at high altitude.

BENGHAZI, *27 July 1943.* Conference with the staff and Group Commanders on the Wiener-Neustadt operation. ACM Douglas attended, and it was decided that the bombers would take off from Benghazi and on return land at air-



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fields in the Tunis area. The decision to take off from Benghazi was made because it was felt that the bombers could fly up the Adriatic Sea and arrive at the target without serious air opposition, whereas from Tunis they would have to fly across Italy and enemy action might jeopardize the mission.

CAIRO, *28 July 1943.* The final test for the Ploesti raid was a pronounced success. I was with General Ent and the senior intelligence and operations officers of the Bomber Command, observing overhead in a Liberator, when all five groups, loaded with 100-lb. delayed-action bombs, went through a dress rehearsal for TIDAL WAVE. Almost 200 Liberators, skimming low over the desert wastes in tight formation, executed their last practice flight. They reached the target on split-second schedule and bombed with deadly accuracy, destroying the desert Ploesti.

BENGHAZI, *31 July 1943.* Visited all five groups and started the briefing with a short talk to all combat crews. The importance of the target was explained, and the necessity for the low-level attack; and, in general, all information not previously known was given out in order that the crews should realize the magnitude of the task assigned.

Seven target forces were to be dispatched as follows:

TARGET FORCE No. 1: Colonel Compton commanding, consisting of 30 B-24s from the 376th Group, will lead the formation and attack target White 1 (Romana-Americana). Attack will be made in 5 waves of six planes each.

TARGET FORCE No. 2: Colonel Baker commanding and Major Brown deputy leader, consisting of 21 B-24s of the 93rd Group, will fly No. 2 position in the route formation and attack target White 2 (Concordia-Vega). Three waves of six planes each plus one wave of three planes.

TARGET FORCE No. 3: Colonel Baker commanding and Major Potts leading, consisting of 15 B-24s of the 93rd Group, will fly No. 3 position in the formation and attack target White 3



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(Standard Petrol Block and Unirea-Speranza), employing five waves of three planes each.

TARGET FORCE No. 4: Colonel Kane commanding, consisting of 46 B-24s of the 98th Group, will fly No. 4 position in the formation and attack Target White 4 (Unirea-Orion and Astra Romana), employing four waves of 10 planes each, plus one wave of 6 planes.

TARGET FORCE No. 5: Colonel Johnson commanding and Captain Kolliner leading, consisting of 18 B-24s of the 44th Group, will fly No. 5 position in the formation and attack Target White 5 (Columbia-Aquila Romana), employing six waves of three planes each.

TARGET FORCE No. 6: Colonel Johnson commanding and Captain Diehl leading, consisting of 18 B-24s of the 44th Group, will fly No. 6 position in the formation and attack Target Blue 1 (Creditul Minier Brazi), employing three waves of six planes each.

TARGET FORCE No. 7: Colonel Woods commanding and Captain Caldwell leading, consisting of 30 B-24s of the 389th Group, will fly in the last position in the formation and attack Target Red 1 (Steaua-Romana, Campina), employing ten waves of three planes each.

Final plans for TIDAL WAVE were discussed with ACM Tedder, and he was exceedingly pleased with the painstaking efforts of everyone to make the attack a success. Prior to his departure for Malta he attended the final briefing of the 376th Group conducted by Colonel Compton and gave an informal talk enthusiastically received by the crews.

I have never seen a large command where everybody had been so thoroughly trained and briefed. There was universally high morale among everyone despite the fact that the dangers involved were fully realized. After the initial decision had been made by me for the low-level attack, the group commanders and their flight leaders pressed the training with an aggressiveness that reflected great credit upon all of them. There was nothing left to do now except to pray for them.



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Benghazi, *1 August 1943*. Operation Tidal Wave came off today on schedule. Without a doubt it was one of the most difficult assignments ever given an air force. The mission required the bombers to fly across the Mediterranean and over the Balkan mountains to reach Ploesti—a record round-trip distance of approximately 2,400 miles. It was necessary to install additional gas tanks in the bomb bays, adding to the dangers.

Ploesti is situated 35 miles north of Bucharest on the River Dambul, which knifes through the Wallachian plain of Rumania. Lying at the foot of the Buzau Mountains, it nestles in the inverted U-shaped valley formed by two ridges descending in a southeasterly direction. It is a naturally defensible area. The ridges protecting the city were known to be bristling with antiaircraft guns. It is one of the most heavily defended targets in Europe. In three previous minor raids—two by the Russians in 1941 and one by a small group of Liberators from the Halverson detachment in June 1942—little damage had been done.

The very first news of the Ploesti operation was bad. Engine trouble caused one of the 98th's Liberators to return to base within a few minutes after takeoff. The landing field at Benina was swirling with red desert dust stirred up by prop wash, and the pilot, in trying to land, hit a concrete telephone pole. The plane crashed and burned, only two members of the crew being saved. For almost 12 hours we anxiously awaited return of the planes with only one brief radio message, "Mission successful," from the lead ship, which broke radio silence after leaving the target area.

Shortly before 2000 hours the first plane landed. I was at the 376th landing ground awaiting the return of General Ent, who flew as command pilot with Colonel Compton in the lead ship. I was happy to see Ent and Compton crawl out of their ship, but they were downcast. In the difficult run up through the valley they missed their I.P. and proceeded to a point north of Bucharest before turning back to Ploesti. Owing to the reverse direction of approach and the



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smoke of attack and defense, their target could not be identified. However, they attacked another target with success.

Far into the night planes limped home from the long and perilous mission. As the story began to unfold, it became more and more evident that one of the greatest feats in the history of military aviation had been accomplished. A crippling blow, it was certain, had been dealt the vital German oil machine, but it would take several days to estimate the extent of the damage accurately.

Some of the eyewitness accounts were fantastic. The force of 164 bombers roared at tree-top level through a curtain of ground fire and, in some cases, concentrated attacks by enemy fighters. Explosions of boilers and gas-storage tanks spread flame and smoke. "It was more like an artist's conception of an air battle than anything I had ever experienced," said Colonel Leon Johnson, who led the 44th Group. "We flew through sheets of flame, and airplanes were everywhere, some of them on fire and others exploding. It's indescribable to anyone who wasn't there."

Liberators flew so low that they dipped their wings through tree tops. One plane actually brought back pieces of corn stalks in its bomb bay. Crewmen told of direct hits on refineries, in boiler houses, fractioning columns, tank farms, and power houses. One boiler house exploded so violently that it destroyed a Liberator flying over the target. Many of the men said that it became almost unbearably hot in their planes as they flew through the wall of flames, licking 300 feet and higher.

Many gun duels took place between the gunners in the planes and machine-gun batteries, on flak towers hidden in haystacks, in farmhouses, and on railway flatcars.

BENGHAZI, *2 August 1943.* The following preliminary report on the Ploesti attack was dispatched top secret, first priority to Generals Marshall and Arnold:

Members of crews have been interrogated and have stated that excellent results were obtained on the Brazi and Campina re-



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fineries. On all Ploesti targets, except the Romana-Americana and possibly the Standard Petrol Block, excellent results were obtained. The Romana Americana target was not recognized by the Group assigned to it because of a mistake in the approach, and it was not attacked. Following statistics are known at the present time:

| | |
|---|---|
| Total aircraft to leave bases | 177 |
| Total aircraft to turn back | 11 |
| Total aircraft over target | 164 |
| Losses over target | 20 |
| Aircraft crashed on landing after turn back | 1 |
| Aircraft lost in sea enroute to target | 2 |
| Aircraft landed at Malta | 3 |
| Aircraft landed at Cyprus | 11 |
| Aircraft landed at Sicily | 7 |
| Aircraft unaccounted for | 32 |

It is expected that the latter figure will be reduced when further information is received. To date it is known that 36 percent of all aircraft were lost from all causes.[13]

[13] LATER: On 6 August the following revised report was made to Generals Marshall and Arnold on the Ploesti losses:

| | |
|---|---|
| Lost or missing in Axis territory due to enemy action | 41 |
| Lost due to other causes (1 crash landing after turnback) | 5 |
| Lost in sea enroute to target | 2 |
| Interned in Turkey | 7 |
| Landed in sea off Turkish coast | 1 |
| Crash landed at friendly bases after being damaged in combat | 2 |

Aircraft lost due to enemy action amounted to 30 percent of the initiated sorties. Of the aircraft which returned to base, 34 were damaged in action.

Losses of personnel are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Killed or missing in action | 440 |
| Interned in Turkey | 79 |

It is believed that about 20 crews which bailed out or made belly-landings are now in the hands of Germans, Rumanians, or Bulgarians. It is known that 54 crewmen were wounded, three of whom are interned in Turkey.



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CAIRO, *3 August 1943*. The summarized first appreciation of damage report on the Ploesti raid was submitted to me by Lieut. Col. W. L. Forster of the British Army. High spots of the report follow:

1. The low-level obliques and the high-level reconnaissance stereophotos have been examined by Middle East Intelligence Unit experts, Mr. L. Eisinger, expert on the Rumanian oil refineries, and the undersigned [Lieut. Col. Forster]. Most of the photographs have still to be reëxamined for final details but this work will not alter the main interpretations given here.

2. Columbia-Aquila Romana (Target White 5). The distillation and cracking plants appear to have been damaged by fires and explosions, and a very great amount of damage done. At least half the boiler plant appears to be wrecked. At least six months of intensive work will be required to put the refinery in working order again.

Astra Romana (Target White 4). Of the three furnaces in the big McKee Distillation Plant, the two most important are wrecked beyond repair and the plant can be considered as immobilized for six months and probably more.

Unirea Orion (Target White 4). The boiler house has been severely damaged, and this is likely to cause at least 30 percent curtailment of operation.

Concordia-Vega (Target White 2). One of the distillation plants and an asphalt plant appear to have been badly damaged, but it is feared that the plant as a whole is unlikely to be out of action for any length of time.

Romana-Americana (Target White 1). This target was not reached by attacking aircraft.

Standard Petrol Block & Unirea-Speranza (Target White 3). No important damage can be perceived here.

3. Only low-level obliques so far available of:

Steaua-Romana, Campina (Target Red 1). A direct hit on the boiler house, followed by an explosion which wrecked one of the attacking aircraft, leads to a reasonable expectation of very serious damage to this absolutely essential part of the plant. The McKee plant was seen to be on fire, as well as other widespread fires.



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Creditul Minier Brazi (Target Blue 1). The obliques indicate that very good work may have been done here too. [14]

[14] LATER: On 22 August the following intelligence report was received from secret sources inside Rumania which, it was pointed out, might give a slightly optimistic view because of Rumanian goodwill towards the Americans and British:

1. The raid on Ploesti has halved the capacity of the refineries and it will take at least one year to increase the output. Neither high-octane petrol nor lubricating oils can be produced in Rumania.

2. Of 45 stills in the Steaua Romana, Campina 37 have been completely destroyed. Pump house, electrical generator plant, and vital tubing almost completely destroyed, preventing the remainder of the stills from functioning. Campina, which was the farthest point bombed by the Americans, receiving damage estimated at the value of 12 milliard lei.

3. Astra Romana at Ploesti, and Creditul Minier at Brazi, were completely destroyed.

4. The production of the Vega installations reduced by 30 percent, "Dobbs" section damaged, and 6 benzine tanks blown up.

5. Unirea and Romana Americana Standard Oil company completely undamaged.

6. No warning of the raid was received from Bulgaria and everybody, including the Germans, was taken by surprise. The Government, including Marshal Antonescu, was at Snagov for the week-end. They heard aircraft overhead heading for Ploesti and thought they were friendly. Later air raid warning was sounded in Bucharest.

7. In Rumania, 36 American aircraft were brought down; and in Bulgaria, 5. Not one fell to A.A. guns proper, but A.A. m/gs mounted on rooftops accounted for some. In their determination to reach the target, others crashed into balloon cables. Of the aircraft brought down, 5 are in fairly good condition.

8. Railway station Ploesti destroyed and two ammunition and petrol trains blown up.

9. 41 American aircraft lost—10 to fighter aircraft, 24 to ground fire or forced to land, 7 to balloons.

10. Reports that peasants in the fields were machine-gunned are unconfirmed.

11. About 100 American airmen are prisoners-of-war. Most of them were injured through bailing out at low altitude and are in Ploesti hospital. The Germans demanded that they should be handed over to them, but the Rumanians refused to do so. The



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CAIRO, *4 August 1943*. While the TIDAL WAVE operation was extremely successful,[15] I was somewhat disappointed because we failed to hit White No. 1 and 2 at all. We did not achieve the 65- to 75-percent destruction we had hoped for because we missed two targets. As it was, we achieved approximately 60-percent destruction and put a serious dent in Germany's oil supply.

CAIRO, *5 August 1943*. A message from General Marshall commending my decision on my next assignment as commander of the Tactical Air Force in England and praising the results of the Ploesti operation. Issued a general order of commendation on TIDAL WAVE to the Bomber Command and planning staff, quoting messages of praise from General Marshall and ACMs Tedder and Douglas.

CAIRO, *9 August 1943*. Additional reports from the Ambassador in Turkey, obtained from secret sources in Rumania, confirm the amount of damage done at Ploesti and indicate that our estimates have been too conservative.

CAIRO, *12 August 1943*. Because unfavorable weather in England has been delaying Operation JUGGLER (Wiener-

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wounded aircrews were visited by the King and Queen Helen, who distributed comforts. The Queen requested that they should be moved to the hospital in Sinaia, but the Rumanians decided that it would be too much for the Germans if they met this request.

12. No private houses in Ploesti were damaged. 80 percent of the casualties were caused when an aircraft crashed into a women's prison, killing about 100 inmates. The accurate bombing and the little damage done to private property greatly impressed the Rumanians and there is an increase in pro-Allied feeling. The raid was not called a "terror raid" in the Rumanian press.

[15] At about this time the German girl who was famous for singing "Lili Marlene" to the troops in the desert broadcast from Berlin radio: "Fine job on Ploesti, Brereton, but you lost too many."



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Neustadt), I asked for a new directive permitting the Ninth Air Force to proceed alone with the operation without further delay.

CAIRO, *13 August 1943.* ACM Tedder advised me that he had recommended that further attacks on Ploesti be postponed in favor of direct support to the coming operations in Italy.

CAIRO, *14 August 1943.* Operation JUGGLER, the attack on the Messerschmitt factory at Wiener-Neustadt, 27 miles south of Vienna, took place today. The 60 Liberators participating took off from Benghazi in the early morning, flew up the Adriatic, and caught the Huns completely by surprise.

The attack demonstrated that no part of Greater Germany was now immune to our air attacks. The Nazis had moved many factories, manufacturing plants, and governmental agencies to this territory, believing them to be out of heavy-bomber range. On the return flight the Liberators landed in the Tunis area—a round trip of approximately 2400 miles. The mission consumed almost 12 hours of flying time. All planes returned safely except one which landed in Switzerland, where the crew was interned.

Capt. Kenneth Caldwell of Kansas City led the raid in the *Scorpion,* in which Col. Edward J. Timberlake flew as command pilot. Caldwell said he did not see a single enemy plane.

CAIRO, *15 August 1943.* Later reports indicate that the Messerschmitt works, a U-shaped plant covering 1,399,000 square feet, were damaged severely. One wing of the plant was blown up. Considerable damage was done to fighter aircraft parked in rows outside the factory. The factory's estimated assembly rate of 400 planes a month, about one-third of the Messerschmitt output, will be sharply curbed.

CAIRO, *16 August 1943.* Decorations awarded to men wounded in action and now recuperating in the 38th Gen-



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eral Hospital at Kilo 13, the American camp built in the desert on the edge of Cairo. Attended a dinner at the American Minister's, followed by a reception. Gen. Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, C-in-C of the Middle East, ACM Douglas, and Lord Moyne attended, in addition to the five touring American senators: Senator Lodge of Massachusetts, Senator Brewster of Maine, Senator Russell of Georgia, Senator Chandler of Kentucky, and Senator Mead of New York.

CAIRO, *17 August 1943*. The end in Sicily came today, 38 days after invasion. Six years ago Mussolini, speaking at the 1937 Italian maneuvers, boasted: "Sicily is so well defended on the land, at sea, and in the air that it would be a nameless folly for anyone to try to invade her. One of the happiest epochs in her 4,000 years of history now begins for her as the geographical center of the Italian empire."

During the first half of August the Ninth Air Force fighters and medium bombers flew continuously against the enemy in a fine display of air-ground coöperation, which had by now been developed to a high peak. Attacks were made on Catania, Randazzo, Milazzo, Bronte, Francaville, and Messina as well as road junctions and vehicle and troop concentrations. Sicilian skies were almost empty of enemy fighters.

The heavies concentrated their attention on Italy, and an attack on the satellite airdromes around Foggia aroused the enemy. He threw up his main fighter force in formations of 20 to 60 planes. Our gunners claimed 43 fighters destroyed and 12 damaged. Our losses were eight Liberators. The crew of Liberator *Caliban* piloted by Lieut. James E. Heller, Midland, Texas, was credited with downing six Me-109s. S/Sgt. Albert H. Oser, Boston, Mass., waist gunner on Liberator *Blessed Event,* shot down three Macchi-202s. Everything indicated the Hun was going to defend Italy with all of his might.

BENGHAZI, *19 August 1943*. Message from the War Department approving the Congressional Medal of Honor for



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Colonel "Killer" Kane and Colonel Leon Johnson for their leadership on the Ploesti raid. Major General Ira Eaker arrived from the U.K. and we discussed the future movements of Ninth Air Force and the organization of the Tactical Air Force in England for invasion of the Continent.

CAIRO, *31 August 1943.* Washington advised us that the Headquarters, Ninth Air Force, including the Bomber Command and Fighter Command, would be transferred to England minus their tactical units and planes. The medium bombers of the 12th and 340th Groups; the fighters of the 57th, 79th, and 324th Groups; the 316th Troop Carrier Group; and the 315th Service Group were transferred to the Twelfth Air Force. The 93rd, 44th, and 389th Heavy Bomber Groups were returned to the Eighth Air Force in England. The 98th and 376th Heavy Bomber Groups, along with the 43rd and 323rd Service Groups, were to be transferred to the Twelfth Air Force. Another cable directed the return of General Ent for permanent duty in the United States. He made a splendid record in Africa.

CAIRO, *3 September 1943.* Operation AVALANCHE, the invasion of Italy, began today with the British Eighth Army landing on the beaches at Reggio di Calabria and Villa San Giovanni. Under cover of fire from four battleships and 400 guns on the Sicilian shore, the British quickly secured the beachheads.

CAIRO, *4 September 1943.* My last official act as commander of the Ninth Air Force in the Middle East was to award decorations for Ploesti in an impressive ceremony attended by representatives of the British and Egyptian forces, as well as over 2,000 Americans, on the polo field of the swank Gezira Sporting Club. The Congressional Medal of Honor was awarded to Col. John R. ("Killer") Kane of the 98th Group for his bravery in leading his men through a blazing target area. Colonel Kane also received the Legion



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of Merit for meritorious service as commander of the 98th Group.

In all, five Congressional Medals of Honor were awarded for the Ploesti raid, the highest number ever given for any single military operation in our country's history.[16] Colonel Leon Johnson, also awarded the Medal of Honor, has returned to England and will receive his award there. Three posthumous awards of the Medal of Honor were to Lieut. Col. Addison E. Baker, Maj. John L. Jerstad, and Lieut. Lloyd H. Hughes. Colonel Baker and Major Jerstad, pilot and co-pilot, went down together, but not until they had led their formation over the target and dropped their bombs. The plane, badly damaged and set on fire by a large antiaircraft shell three miles before reaching the target, probably could have been belly-landed, but Colonel Baker ignored the fact, knowing it would disrupt the formation and thus seriously jeopardize the success of the mission. Major Jerstad, who served on the planning staff, volunteered for the mission and only through his own persistence obtained General Ent's permission to go. Lieutenant Hughes's plane, flying in one of the last formations, received direct hits from large- and small-caliber guns, causing sheets of gasoline to stream from the bomb-bay tank and the left-wing tank. Although Lieutenant Hughes could have landed in one of the numerous grain fields before reaching the target, he flew his plane into the target area where flames were leaping above the bombing level of the formation. After successfully bombing his objective, Lieutenant Hughes's aircraft emerged from the target area with the left wing aflame. He then attempted to land in a dry creek bed, but had to pull up because of a bridge. Just as he let down to try again the plane exploded.

Distinguished Service Crosses were awarded to General Ent "for his tireless efforts, brilliant planning, and directing of the Ploesti operation," and to Col. K. K. Compton, Lieut. Col. Delbert H. Hahn, Lieut. Col. Julian M. Bleyer, Maj.

[16] LATER: This was still true when the war ended.



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Herbert I. Singler, Jr., and Maj. Norman C. Appold, all of whom displayed exceptional courage and daring in leading their elements while under heavy attacks.

CAIRO, *5 September 1943.* The books were closed on the Ninth Air Force in the Middle East. Our record:

| | |
|---|---|
| Missions | 1,060 |
| Sorties | 15,184 |
| Bombs dropped | 36,629,543 lbs. |
| Enemy aircraft destroyed | 666 |
| Ships sunk | 109 |

We bombed African targets all the way from Mersa-Matruh, Egypt, to Cape Bon in Tunisia. In the Mediterranean we hit the islands of Sicily, Crete, Rhodes, Leros, Pantelleria, and Lampedusa. On the Continent, Greece and Italy felt the weight of our bombs, and Ploesti and Wiener-Neustadt will be long remembered as two of the war's outstanding air attacks.



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## PART V

# ENGLAND

## Ninth Air Force

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# ENGLAND: Ninth Air Force

UNITED KINGDOM, *10 September 1943.* We arrived from Africa, and after breakfast went on by air from Prestwick, Scotland, to Hendon airport near London. Brig. Gen. Hugh Knerr, who like myself graduated from the Naval Academy, met me and we went at once to General Eaker's headquarters at Wide Wing, code name for headquarters of the Eighth Air Force, at Teddington, west of London. General Eaker was extremely cordial and gave me complete freedom of action regarding personnel and organization.

HQS. EIGHTH AIR FORCE, ENGLAND, *13 September 1943.* I am beginning to realize the implications of my new assignment, with a study of the forces contemplated for the U.S. Tactical Air Force to be known henceforth as the Ninth Air Force. It will be a tremendous job.

This air force differs materially in its composition from the Eighth Air Force. Its mission is to coöperate with and support the action of the field armies. It is the air striking force at the disposal of the ground commander. It will eliminate the enemy air threat to our armies; will isolate the combat areas by destroying reinforcements and communications, and by direct action on the battlefield. The Eighth Air Force is the strategic air arm. With its heavy bombers and long-range fighters it will destroy the enemy air force and the sources of air strength. It will destroy enemy industry and power to make war or resist our invasion.

On the basis of recommendations of a board of officers headed by Maj. Gen. Follett Bradley, Inspector General of



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the Army Air Forces, it had been determined that the total U.S. air strength in the ETO would be approximately 360,000. Of this figure the scheduled strength of the Ninth Air Force 90 days prior to invasion would be approximately 197,000. The arrival of troops for this force was to start in late October at the rate of approximately 6,000 a month and build up to 25,000 a month until in March, when 75 percent of the troops arriving in the U.K. would be for the Ninth Air Force. The remainder would be composed of detachments of the old Ninth Air Force in Africa and elements of the Eighth Air Force to be transferred to the new Ninth Air Force. The problems involved in the reception, training, and organization of such a force were indeed multifarious and complex. It was necessary to decide immediately on a commander for the Service Command. General Eaker offered me the choice of any service commander then present in the ETO. After a discussion of the requirements of the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces it became evident that the choice was between Maj. Gen. Henry J. F. Miller and General Knerr. General Miller was agreed upon, and this decision was transmitted to him with the request that he furnish me within 48 hours an outline on service command requirements to be taken to Washington.

PRESTWICK, SCOTLAND, *14 September 1943.* Departed via A.T.C. for the United States.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *16 September 1943.* Home again almost two years to the day after I left. When we touched down here I reflected that I had made a complete trip around the world by air, even though part of it was with the Japs chasing me. My campaigning had taken me from Washington to San Francisco and then to the Philippines, Java and Australia, India, to Africa, and thence to England, and finally back where I started from. I was heartily greeted by my Chiefs, General Marshall and General Arnold, assigned an office and given a free rein to proceed with my work. I was



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surprised and pleased to find the extent to which foresight and efficient planning had proceeded for equipment and personnel for the Ninth Air Force. What a difference two years had made! It took us a long time to get started, but now we had acquired the know-how to run a war and were turning out the stuff to back it up.

WASHINGTON, *20 September 1943.* The days and nights were filled by staff meetings and conferences, with the planning and operations sections of the Air Forces and the War Department. All this was very important, albeit very dull. It was all part of the staggering load of planning, preparing, and training necessary to invade Hitler's "Fortress Europe."

MAXTON, N.C., *23 September 1943.* I arrived here today for a conference at the Airborne Training Center with Maj. Gen. Joe Swing. He concurred in my recommendation to delay departure of the Troop Carrier Groups to the ETO. This was desirable in order to profit by the better weather for training. Plans were completed to set up navigational aids and radio and flight procedure similar to that which existed in England in order to shorten the operational training period required when they arrived in the United Kingdom. A more intensive degree of training was agreed on to raise the standard of proficiency of the glider pilots.

TAMPA, FLORIDA, *30 September 1943.* My next stop was Hqs., Third Air Force, command of which I had relinquished just two years previously to go to the Philippines. The Third Air Force at this time was charged with the operational training of the medium-bomber crews to be assigned to the Ninth Air Force. A number of training procedures were set up based on the combat experience of the bombers operating from England.

WASHINGTON, *7 October 1943.* I have set down here a brief résumé of the more important discussions and decisions



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bearing on the readying of the Ninth Air Force for D-Day:

(1) Training of the Service Command units must stress mobility to the utmost. The men should be trained in field warfare, road discipline, local defense, and the use of mobile field equipment. Once the invasion starts, the Service Command units will have to be highly mobile.

(2) In view of the adverse weather conditions in England during the winter, it was decided to keep the bulk of the Troop Carrier Forces as long as possible in the much more favorable training areas of Carolina, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

(3) Every effort will be made to install Rebecca, Eureka, and PPF (radar) equipment on the C-47s prior to their departure for the ETO to obviate difficulties and delays of installing it in England. This radar equipment, which provides a reliable means of position-finding, is absolutely necessary for large-scale airborne operations.

(4) The extreme shortage of self-sealing gas tanks for Troop Carrier planes was a cause for concern. A compromise was reached whereby self-sealing tanks would be shipped to England as fast as possible for installation there.[1]

(5) Original plans called for the Ninth Air Force to receive four types of fighters: P-51, P-47, P-38, and P-39. Because of the difficulties of maintenance and repair of a multiplicity of types, I recommended that the Ninth be assigned only the P-51 and P-47 initially.

(6) Although there was a serious shortage in medium-bomber crews of navigators and gunners, it was decided not to delay the arrival of those men who had completed their training in order to round out complete crews. Although this would throw an additional load on personnel in the ETO, it was necessary in order to gain the maximum amount of combat experience before D-Day.

[1] The priority for vital materials necessary to protect the fuel tanks for Troop Carriers was so low, and other demands so vital, that appreciable numbers of these self-sealing tanks were never received in England.



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(7) Arrangements were made for bomber group commanders (Medium and Light) to come to the ETO for indoctrination and temporary duty. They would then return to the States to direct the balance of training of their groups on the basis of lessons learned in combat.

The details mentioned are only a few of the many that had to be studied and decided on. While such work seems far removed from combat, there was not one of these details which was not vital to me and to the success of the Ninth Air Force.

UNITED KINGDOM, *15 October 1943.* Back in England with by far the biggest job of my military career ahead of me. My movements were supposed to be "top secret," but I learned that while I was in the States, Lord Haw Haw had announced on the radio from Berlin that I had been designated commander of the Ninth Air Force in England.

A number of the key members of my staff from the Middle East have arrived, including my Chief of Staff, Brig. Gen. Vic Strahm. Brig. Gen. Robert C. Candee, former commander of the Eighth Air Support Command which has been absorbed by the Ninth Air Force, has helped him set up Hqs. at Gangway and the organization is taking shape.

Gangway is the code name for Hqs. Ninth Air Force and is located at Sunninghill Park, adjoining Ascot. The fashionable Ascot race course was next to our headquarters, and one of our entrances had a driveway across the famous straightaway. The main headquarters building was an aged but stately, vine-clad structure owned by the patent medicine king and financier, Philip E. Hill, and taken over under wartime measures by the Air Ministry. The estate has a historic background; Nell Gwyn is said to have ridden there in her time, while not far away Henry VIII, according to the local legends, used to go hunting with bow and arrow.

ASCOT, ENGLAND, *17 October 1943.* At the outset, the new Ninth Air Force was to have six commands: The



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Bomber Command, comprising the medium and light bombers; the Fighter Command, comprising the fighters, fighter-bombers, and reconnaissance planes; the Troop Carrier Command, composed of C-47 transports and gliders for airborne operations and air resupply; the Service Command, which would maintain and supply all aircraft; the Engineer Command, which would construct airfields, and bases and other installations on the Continent after D-day; and the Air Defense Command, which would be responsible for the air defense of all Ninth Air Force installations and rear areas of the armies.

Present at the first Commanders' Meeting were: Maj. Gen. Henry Miller, Air Service Command; Brig. Gen. E. R. ("Pete") Quesada, Fighter Command; Brig. Gen. Ben Giles, Troop Carrier Command; Brig. Gen. R. C. Candee, of the former Eighth Air Support Command; and Col. Sam Anderson, Bomber Command.

The four groups of medium bombers under Colonel Anderson's command were organized into two wings of two groups each, with Col. Carl R. Storrie and Col. Herbert B. Thatcher designated wing commanders. The medium groups were all equipped with B-26 Marauders, and most of the targets in their range (350-mile radius) were in the occupied countries of France, Belgium, and Holland. Since the policy of the Allies was to protect the people of the occupied countries as much as possible, many of the targets in the Marauders' range had to be cleared on a high level before attack.

WIDE WING, *18 October 1943.* Attended Commanders' Meeting at which were present Lieut. Gen. Jacob Devers and General Eaker and key members of the ETO staff to discuss the outline plan submitted for Operation RANKIN covering the situation in the event of a German surrender.

It had been thought for some time that there was a possibility of a German surrender. The turn of the military operation in favor of the Russians in the east, the inability of the Nazis to control the sea lanes to Europe, our successes in Italy



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with the collapse of the Fascists, and the unknown factors in the Nazi political situation were considered factors that might force a Nazi surrender before the invasion of the Continent. In this event plans must be prepared for the quick movement of air and ground forces to the Continent and the immediate establishment of the necessary zones of influence and control measures.

Operation RANKIN was drawn up to cover three cases:

(1) In case Germany surrenders before 1 January.

(2) In case Germany surrenders by 1 March.

(3) In case Germany surrenders by 30 April.

ASCOT, ENGLAND, *19 October 1943.* The Ninth Bomber Command's present strength is about 225 Marauders, and the principal job is to support the Eighth Air Force in POINT-BLANK operations. POINT-BLANK is the code name for the air battle to reduce the German Air Force and industries to the point where a land invasion will be justified. It is really the opening of the Battle of Europe, because our planes will carry the war to the heart of Germany.

European weather is a serious handicap to all air operations throughout much of the year. Not only are the English fogs a serious deterrent, but bad weather, clouds, and the overcast on the Continent are frequently unpredictable. The percentage of abortive missions due to weather is disturbingly high. For example, two missions of 288 Marauders took off from East Anglia yesterday and actually crossed the enemy coast but did not drop one bomb because of adverse weather conditions.

Timing of the Marauder attacks is worked out in an effort to divert enemy fighters from attacking the heavies as they pass over enroute to targets in Germany. But we have not been getting the desired results. Recent experience indicates that the Marauders attract minimum fighter reaction when the heavies, forming up over England, are on the enemy's radar screen. The German controllers keep their fighters on the ground when the mediums attack in the morning and



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the weather indicates the possibility of the B-17s and B-24s coming over later in the day.

To give greater assistance to POINT-BLANK operations in forcing fighter reaction, I have requested an increased schedule of industrial targets for the Marauders, thereby making the enemy more sensitive to medium bomber attacks.

ASCOT, *20 October 1943.* Discussions with Lieut. Col. Ken Littauer, fiction editor of *Collier's* now serving on my A-2 staff about our intelligence problems. We have a serious shortage of combat intelligence personnel and training is not up to the standard required. I am requesting General Candee, who is leaving for Washington tomorrow, to emphasize the necessity for procuring immediately adequate personnel.

ASCOT, *31 October 1943.* During the last days of October operations of the Ninth Air Force were at a minimum, and planning and organization for Operation OVERLORD, invasion of the Continent, consumed most of our time.

For over a year an Allied planning staff had been organized in England to prepare the outline plan for the invasion of France. The time and place for the invasion already had been determined. The forces available for the invasion were accurately known, and detailed planning had now started. Many conferences were held with Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, commander of the RAF's Fighter Command, who achieved a notable air victory over the Luftwaffe in the Dieppe raid; Air Marshal D'Albiac, commander of the RAF's Second Tactical Air Force; and AVM Saunders, commander of the RAF's 10th Fighter Group. AM Leigh-Mallory has already been selected (I understand that the Prime Minister himself made the choice and that it had been approved by the combined Chiefs of Staff) to command all Allied aircraft for the invasion. His command will be the Allied Expeditionary Air Force, of which the main components will be the Ninth Air Force and the RAF's Second Tactical Air Force, called "Second TAF." The Strategic Air Forces, the Eighth



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Air Force, and the RAF's Bomber Command are to be separate from his command until shortly before the invasion, when the efforts of the tactical and strategic forces will be coördinated through his Hqs. for the final phase.

Col. Melvin Hall arrived from Washington and has been named A-2 (Intelligence) officer, Ninth Air Force, and Group Capt. Noel Clifton, RAF, was assigned as senior liaison officer and Deputy Chief of Staff. Clifton will be our link with the RAF and Air Ministry.

In my contacts with the British, I was struck by the friendliness and sincere hospitality of the local folk. Americans were beginning to overrun the English countryside, but the British took it all in good spirit. They seemed to have their minds set on only one thing: conquering their bitter enemy.

ASCOT, *2 November 1943.* Approved a combined directive and doctrine for Airborne Operations prepared jointly by Maj. Gen. William C. Lee, commander of the 101st Airborne Division, Brig. Gen. Ben Giles, Troop Carrier Command, and my planning staff. It will serve as a guide for combined training and operations. Combined training between the Troop Carrier Command and the 101st Airborne Division will start 15 November.

We all realize that the most intimate relationship must exist between the airborne troops and the Troop Carriers to promote mutual confidence and knowledge of the many problems involved.

MIDDLE WALLOP, ENGLAND, *6 November 1943.* Today I inspected Fighter Command headquarters and found conditions excellent, which showed a great deal of hard work on the part of General Quesada and his staff. One serious shortcoming is radio equipment. Our first fighter group, the 354th, has arrived and will move to East Anglia immediately to complete training. This group, which trained on P-39s in the States, will be assigned the new P-51-B Mustang, with the



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Packard Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, perhaps the world's fastest single-engine aircraft.

ASCOT, *11 November 1943*. To familiarize myself with our installations, status of training, and progress of plans for future operations, I have spent several days inspecting the Troop Carrier and Air Service Command activities. On my inspection rounds, all Ninth Air Force personnel are reminded that our slogan is "KEEP MOBILE." "KEEP MOBILE" signs are being put up at our bases. Since our job is to support the invasion and coöperate with the Ground Forces, once D-day comes we'll be a traveling circus. I did not want any of our force to get too comfortable or to think in terms of static warfare. All training must be with mobility in mind.

WIDE WING, *15 November 1943*. Air Commanders' Meeting presided over by General Eaker, at which the main points of discussion were the conservation of food, the discipline, morale, and appearance of American troops, and the increased category of targets for the Marauders. In order to utilize every square foot of shipping space for war material for OVERLORD, it is deemed imperative that all commands stress the conservation of food. In comparison with the British rations the Americans are extremely well fed. The oft-repeated statement that the American is the best-fed soldier in the world is no idle boast. I've seen the rations of them all in this war, and there is not even a close second.

ASCOT, *18 November 1943*. Conference with Col. Tommy Hitchcock, the famous polo player and World War I pilot, and Colonel Sweetser, who are returning home on the question of P-51 procurement. I emphasized that, while the P-51 should be provided with an extra blower for medium-altitude work, it was most important that nothing be done to alter or delay our procurement of Mustangs.

DEVON, *19 November 1943*. Came here by train with



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General Devers and party to inspect the Ground Force Assault Training Center. Witnessed the successive phases of the final training of a battalion combat team in amphibious operations, using live ammunition to attack a "hedgehog" (a beach strong point).

ASCOT, *20 November 1943.* Discussed airborne-troop-carrier operations with Brig. Gen. James Gavin, assistant division commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, who has just come from Italy to act as an airborne adviser on the Army Group's staff.

General Gavin's experience in airborne operations in Italy, in which he earned the D.S.C., makes him invaluable as an adviser. He is familiar with the problems connected with airborne action, and I wish to use him to the utmost to direct our planning and training. Full authority has been given him to deal directly with both the Troop Carrier Command and the airborne divisions in order to get best results.

STANMORE, ENGLAND, *25 November 1943.* Activation of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force, with AM Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory in command, is announced. AM Leigh-Mallory's order read:

On 15th November, headquarters Fighter Command was disbanded. The Fighter Command which we have known for seven years has ceased to exist; in its place has arisen the Allied Expeditionary Air Force with the Second Tactical Air Force, the Ninth U.S. Air Force, the Air Defense of Great Britain, and No. 38 Group. . . . Now as commander-in-chief of AEAF I am privileged to lead a joint force of which much is expected. To the Second Tactical Air Force and to the Ninth U.S. Air Force who will be the spearhead of the assault, I extend my sincere greetings. . . . I look forward to the future with confidence, for the spirit that won the Battle of Britain will win in no less certain manner the Greater Battle of Europe.

LONDON, *26 November 1943.* Gave a box party to see Irving Berlin in *This Is the Army* at the Palladium.



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STANMORE, ENGLAND, *29 November 1943.* At a conference at Air Headquarters of AEAF today AM Leigh-Mallory told me that the Air Ministry is reopening the whole question of additional targets for the mediums in occupied Europe.

Determined opposition exists among the governments-in-exile of occupied Europe to air attack of objectives in their homelands. While it is not hard to understand their feeling, nevertheless the situation must be faced and politics eliminated. Profitable targets known to be producing critical war supplies have been consistently denied. This has resulted in my being compelled to repeat attacks on a number of objectives of no further military value, many of which are destroyed by earlier attack. Not only am I risking and losing aircraft in futile operations but I am not succeeding in my primary combat mission to support the Eighth Air Force. On many occasions the Prime Minister has supported the governments concerned.

I learned from Leigh-Mallory that the Marauders might be directed against the Pas-de-Calais area, where the Germans are erecting some sort of installations for secret weapons. The code names of "CROSSBOW" and "NO BALL" were given these targets, about which everything is very hush-hush.

Operational control of the Ninth Air Force will pass to AEAF on 15 December.

BOXTED, ENGLAND, *30 November 1943.* Flew to East Anglia with Colonel Schott to inspect the 354th Fighter Group, the first American group in England to fly Mustangs: This group, commanded by Lieut. Col. Kenneth Martin, of Kansas City, Mo., is well trained and I expect great things from it. Several American pilots who served in the RAF Eagle Squadrons have been transferred to the 354th.

ASCOT, *1 December 1943.* The horrible English weather gave us a bad licking in November, restricting our Marauder



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operations to 12 days for the month. We got in two fairly good attacks. On 3 November we sent out three missions of 72 planes each against airfields at St. André de l'Eure, Tricqueville, and Amsterdam-Schipol. Altogether on that date the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces had 1,216 planes over Germany, Belgium, and France—the biggest day yet for the American air force.

Heavy concentration of flak was received over Amsterdam-Schipol. Two planes were lost and 51 out of the remaining 70 landed with battle damage. The escorting Spitfires destroyed ten Me-109s. This was a stirring example of Anglo-American teamwork. On 11 November 157 Marauders attacked the Cherbourg area, and other attacks were made on airfields at Lille, Cambrai, St. Omer, Berok-sur-Mer, and Chièvres (Belgium).

Ever since the Marauders were put into production they have been severely criticized, but we are beginning to get evidence that the aircraft is considerably better than its critics admit. Like all other planes it has its flaws, but it is proving its battle-worth. On the Amsterdam-Schipol mission the B-26 *Liberty Lady,* piloted by Flight Officer Richard E. Robinson, Pittsfield, Ill., proved that Marauders can take it. On its bomb run the *Liberty Lady* was severely hit by flak, two direct hits knocking out the right motor and piercing the right gas tank. Other hits riddled the fuselage. Another burst put four holes in the left engine nacelle, and the engine began smoking. The bombardier, Lieut. Lloyd Kisner, was seriously wounded but stayed at his post, releasing his bombs. Heading homeward with one engine out, the other smoking, and the bomb-bay doors jammed by flak, *Liberty Lady* dropped out of formation. Flak batteries concentrated on the crippled plane and more hits were scored on the fuselage and right wing. The smoking left engine continued to function until about 15 miles off the English coast where it quit. The pilot went into a glide and somehow got the engine started again when they got down to 2,000 feet. Four miles from the coast the engine stopped again. Over the coast, but



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with altitude of only 500 feet, the pilot ordered the crew to bail out because he did not wish to risk a crash-landing with the ship saturated with gasoline. Setting the ship on a course away from any towns, F/O Robinson was the last to jump. He reported: "I pulled the ring and it came out in my hand with the wire dangling. I thought it had torn loose and I yelled, 'You dirty——!' Just then the chute opened. The plane and I hit the ground about the same time. I looked across in the other field and it was completely aflame."

ASCOT, ENGLAND, *2 December 1943.* Brig. Gen. Richard E. Nugent, former Chief of Staff of the First Air Force, reported for duty as deputy Chief of Staff for operations.

OLD SARUM, ENGLAND, *2–3–4 December 1943.* Attended a senior officers' combined RAF, Allied Expeditionary Air Force, and Army orientation school, at which I lectured on the role of the Ninth Air Force and the doctrine of American tactical air support.

ASCOT, *5 December 1943.* Our headquarters life is beginning to hum, with most sections well-staffed and deep in planning for OVERLORD, the most complex military operation ever conceived. The quiet English countryside 35 miles west of London resembles a little bit of America with Yanks everywhere. Country estates, requisitioned by the Air Ministry, are being used as billets for the American officers. Big 2½-ton trucks, jeeps, and American staff cars monopolize the narrow English roads. The pubs, with their barmaids, are overflowing after duty hours with Yanks. The English smilingly give up their homes to us and accept our "invasion" in good spirits. The warmth and sincerity of the people are doing much to bring about a closer relationship between our two countries. Lord Derby's Sunningdale estate, Rosemount, Frognal, Brockenhurst, Auld Hame, and Castle Mead are among the more than 40 famous English homes quartering American officers. The Berkshire Country Club, where many



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famous golf champions have played, has been turned into an officers' mess and billets. At nearby Sunningdale golf course, Bobby Jones shot a 66–68 in 1926, setting a record for the qualifying round of the British Open. Yanks are swarming all over the nearby countryside—to Windsor, site of historic Windsor Castle and the royal Windsor Forest, Maidenhead, High Wycombe, and Staines.

I have noticed that in every country I've been in during this war children flock around American soldiers. By British standards, American candy and gum rations are extravagant, and most soldiers are very generous in sharing their candy and gum with the British. American slang is creeping into the local language and "Any gum, chum?" is almost a byword of British kids. A standing joke among Americans is the British habit of saying, "You cawn't miss it" in giving directions. I don't know why it is, but the English simply cannot give understandable directions.

WIDE WING, *6 December 1943.* At a meeting at General Eaker's headquarters I strongly objected to an AEAF directive which indicated that AM D'Albiac, commanding RAF's Second TAF, might be placed as intermediate commander between me and AM Leigh-Mallory. Generals Devers and Eaker agreed completely with my view.

STANMORE, *8 December 1943.* After considerable opposition from the RAF the objectionable paragraph in the AEAF directive concerning AM D'Albiac finally was eliminated. It was stated at this meeting that the Air Ministry is assuming a very grave attitude towards the NO BALL targets in the Pas-de-Calais. The Ninth Air Force has already been assigned a category of these targets. The British intelligence has been gathering information about these installations since last summer when work was begun on them. They are located in the Pas-de-Calais area about 120 to 140 miles from London and in the Cherbourg area a like distance from Southampton. The installations are thick-walled con-



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crete tunnels with one end curved. From the air they resemble giant skis and as a result are sometimes referred to in official circles as "ski sites." It is known that the Germans have been experimenting for some time on rockets and pilotless aircraft. The fact that antiaircraft batteries are being installed around the sites indicates that they are nearing completion. It is estimated that if the pilotless aircraft functions with any degree of accuracy, rapid and simultaneous fire from the approximately 100 sites in the Pas-de-Calais area would achieve the equivalent of at least a 2,000-ton attack in 24 hours.

STANMORE, *9 December 1943.* At a conference at AEAF headquarters on airborne operations, it was suggested by 21st Army Group (British) and Lieut. Gen. Browning, British airborne commander, that all Troop Carrier forces be under a single command. I agreed in principle provided the command is American. This was unacceptable to the British, and ACM Leigh-Mallory finally agreed that the policy would be for American control of American airborne operations and British control of British airborne operations.

ASCOT, ENGLAND, *10 December 1943.* ACM Leigh-Mallory unexpectedly called to discuss our plans for Operation RANKIN. He was very much provoked that the plans had gone directly to American Air Force Hqs. in U.K. and to COSSAC (Chiefs of Staff Supreme Allied Command) instead of through his headquarters. I explained as diplomatically as I could that the Ninth Air Force did not come under his operational control until 15 December.

ASCOT, *11 December 1943.* The Luftwaffe made its first attack last night on Ninth Air Force airfields in England. Twenty Dornier 217s attacked four fields in East Anglia, three medium-bomber fields, Earl's Colne, Great Dunmow, Andrews, and one fighter station, Gosfield, all grouped within



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20 miles. At Gosfield eight Americans were killed, seven seriously wounded, and 21 slightly wounded. The airfield was new, having been dedicated only three days ago, and was without antiaircraft defense.

ASCOT, *14 December 1943.* Yesterday was a record day. The Eighth and Ninth Air Forces dispatched 1,462 aircraft, the largest Allied force ever put in the air in a single day in any theater. The heavies bombed Kiel, Bremen, and Hamburg, and four groups of Marauders plastered the Luftwaffe's highly important fighter base at Amsterdam-Schipol. Aside from the record number of planes sent out, it marked the beginning of long-range fighter escort for the heavies. Forty-five Mustangs of the 354th Group accompanied the heavies to Kiel and provided withdrawal support. By employing wing drop tanks, the Mustangs were able to make this nearly 1,000-mile round trip and remain over the target long enough to protect the heavies from fighter attacks.

This must have come as a huge surprise to the Germans who have been marshaling their fighter forces inside Germany to concentrate their attacks on our heavies. We are ready for them.

ASCOT, *15 December 1943.* Lieut. Gen. Omar Bradley, commander of the First U.S. Army, and Maj. Gen. Harold R. Bull, chief of operations for American forces, came by to discuss an attack on beach defenses. Tests will be made to determine the effectiveness of medium bombers in blasting through beach, wire, and mine defenses.

This is the day AEAF takes over operational control of the Ninth. At an official luncheon for Ninth Air Force commanders I sat next to Lord Trenchard and we had our usual chat about our old friend, General Billy Mitchell. England owes its independent RAF to Lord Trenchard, who in his country won the battle that Bill Mitchell unsuccessfully gave his career for in the United States.



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Stanmore, England, *20 December 1943.* Principal topic at the AEAF commanders' meeting was the procedure for attacks on the Crossbow targets, where the Germans are busily engaged in preparing what our best sources indicate are installations for launching their so-called secret weapons against London. We resumed bombing of these targets, but out of 193 Marauders dispatched only one attack was carried out because of the overcast. They are very well camouflaged and hard to locate. Every effort is being made to keep all information in connection with the Crossbow and No Ball targets "top secret" so as not to cause a panic among the public. On orders of the Prime Minister himself these targets can be referred to in the press only as "military objectives," in a way heightening the mystery about them.

Ascot, *23 December 1943.* Officers of the Ninth Air Force entertained 700 English children with an American Christmas party at the Berkshire Country Club. Santa Claus, who is called "Father Christmas" by the kids over here, came in an American jeep. Ice cream, a strange dish to most English children, made a hit.

Ascot, *25 December 1943.* Plans for organization of the Fighter Command initially into two Air Support Commands for the invasion were discussed with Generals Strahm and Nugent. Overlord plans call for two American invading armies, each of which will have a supporting air command.

These commands will include, besides the staff, the necessary troops and equipment to detect and track approaching enemy aircraft, and the fighter groups to destroy them. Tactical reconnaissance squadrons, fighter-equipped and specially trained, will provide intelligence both for the supporting air forces and for the army commanders. Fighter-bomber groups will be equipped and trained to coöperate in the ground battle.

These commands are extremely flexible. The air support commander lives and works with his army commander. As



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the need arises in one or another of the armies, the air force commander will detach or reinforce the air units. The medium bombers are held under the control of the air force. They are used to further the fight wherever higher headquarters deems best. The requests of the armies are discussed at a daily staff meeting and operations planned in view of the overall picture.

The closest possible coördination is necessary with the strategic air forces and the other components of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force to insure that all objectives are covered. This coördination is the principal job of AEAF.

ASCOT, *28 December 1943.* The shortage of fighter planes is disturbing. Of five groups on hand, only one is in combat, another has 10 P-47s, and the other three have no aircraft.

This is seriously behind shipping programs from the U.S. Unless the situation is remedied it will be almost impossible to get a proper standard of training. Also additional fighter groups, which I must furnish, are badly needed for support to the Eighth Air Force. The more fighters we can give for escort work, the deeper and heavier will be our attacks. The all-important battle is on and the Hun must be knocked out in a comparatively short time—the invasion depends on it.

RAMSBURY, EARL'S COLNE, BOXTED, *30 December 1943.* Observed a 101st Airborne Division-Troop Carrier exercise in which five serials, about one brigade, took off from Aldermaston and landed at Ramsbury. It was excellent, indicating that a high degree of mutual training had been received despite very unfavorable weather. Flew to Earl's Colne to check the Bomber Command, which had a mission on CROSSBOW targets. Next landed at Boxted and witnessed the landing and interrogation of pilots of the 354th Fighter Group who had escorted the heavies to Ludwigshafen. It was another record day for American planes, with 1,571 Eighth and Ninth Air Force sorties. The hunting was excellent.



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WIDE WING, *31 December 1943.* Conference with General Spaatz and General Eaker on reorganization of the U.S. Air Forces in the ETO. General Spaatz, recently back from Italy, will command the Strategic Air Forces in Europe, which will consist of the Eighth Air Force in England and the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy. Maj. Gen. Jimmy Doolittle will move to England to command the Eighth Air Force. General Eaker will command Allied Air Forces in the Mediterranean, including the Fifteenth (Strategic) and the Twelfth (Tactical) Air Forces. The Ninth Air Force is under AEAF for operations but will come under General Spaatz's command for administration. As the year ended, the buildup chart showed that the Ninth Air Force had about 40 percent of its ultimate strength.

STANMORE, ENGLAND, *1 January 1944.* Most important subject discussed at the AEAF commanders' meeting was my request for an enlargement of the scope of the directive to the Bomber Command to permit other targets to be attacked when higher-priority targets cannot be bombed because of weather.

MARK'S HALL, ENGLAND, *4 January 1944.* The Bomber Command instituted a policy of two missions a day, weather permitting. The first Marauders were off in darkness to bomb CROSSBOW targets. They were refueled and rearmed for their second mission in about two hours. Bomber crews reported the temperature over France at 25° below zero at bombing altitude, and terrifically high winds.

ASCOT, *6 January 1944.* At my suggestion a two-day series of orientation lectures on the employment of the Tactical Air Force opened for a group of senior Ground and Air Force officers, including Lieutenant General Bradley, Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, commander of the Fifth Corps, Maj. Gen. Leven Allen, Bradley's Chief of Staff, Major General Lee of the 101st Airborne Division, and many others.



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Criticism was sought from the Ground Force officers for the purpose of establishing procedures and discussing difficulties. Many points were settled and clarified. All agree that the orientation lectures should be continued to include all corps and division key staff officers. "Brad," whose comments were most valuable, was emphatic in expressing his opinion of the value of such meetings. The discussions brought out that both the British and the Americans were particularly anxious to learn all about the methods of control for coöperation of the air and ground, both in the invasion phase and later. Everyone felt that the critical phase would be during the assault when communications were from England to the ships in the Channel, to the air, and to the landing troops.

ASCOT, *7 January 1944.* Received preliminary word of fundamental changes in Operation OVERLORD as a result of General Montgomery's assumption of command of the British armies. The changes are in

(1) plan of maneuver;
(2) sequence of the landing of the armies;
(3) objectives assigned the American forces in the first phase.

The new plan is more acceptable from the air point of view, and also General Bradley's.

Maj. Gen. Ralph Royce, who is now without a command since General Devers became deputy C-in-C of the Mediterranean, will be assigned as Deputy Commander, Ninth Air Force.

The Marauder *Mild and Bitter* became the first B-26 to complete 50 missions in the ETO. Three members of the crew who went on the original mission, a low-level raid to Ijmuiden, Holland, are still with *Mild and Bitter.* They are Capt. Paul Shannon, pilot, Sgt. Ralph M. Stephens, radio gunner, and Sgt. Paul S. Jordan, tail gunner.

ASCOT, *8 January 1944.* The Fighter Command is now organized into two Air Support Commands, with General



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Quesada commanding the IX Tactical Air Command and acting commander of the XIX Tactical Air Command until a commander is appointed. He will continue to supervise all fighter and communications training.

ASCOT, *11 January 1944.* The battle to destroy Germany's fighter strength began today. Until we gain air supremacy first priority will be German fighters—to destroy the factories that build them, to hit them on the ground, and to blast them out of the sky. All available heavies of the Eighth Air Force attacked the Junkers-88 factory at Halberstadt, the Messerschmitt-110 factory at Brunswick, and the Focke-Wulf-190 factory at Oschersleben, all located in Saxony about 100 miles west of Berlin. The heavies made a feint at Berlin and then veered off.

The Hun threw up everything he had at us. The resulting air battle was probably the most vicious yet fought. Our losses were heavy—55 heavies and five fighters failed to return —but we dealt the Germans a tremendous blow: 155 fighters destroyed, 53 probably destroyed, and 54 damaged.

Over Oschersleben Maj. James H. Howard, one of the squadron commanders of the 354th Fighter Group and a former Flying Tiger, engaged a force of about thirty enemy planes who attacked the heavies on withdrawal. When the Nazis struck there wasn't an American Fighter plane in sight. Out of nowhere a single Mustang appeared and tore into the attackers. With all guns blazing he attacked five and six enemy planes at a time. He broke up their formations and drove them down and away. He kept diving, attacking, and climbing until all of his guns quit. By this time the Nazis had been dispersed and the heavies were out of danger. Maj. Allison Brooks, leading the Fortress formation, on his arrival back at base said: "That was the greatest exhibition I have ever seen. I hope to God he made it home."[2]

Capt. Robert J. Brooks, Little Rock, Ark., another 354th

[2] LATER: On return to his home base, Major Howard modestly claimed only two enemy planes shot down, although the For-



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Mustang pilot, had a hair-raising experience in the battle. He shot down an Me-109, shared another, probably destroyed two more, and flew back to his base minus almost half a wing.

Captain Brooks and two other Mustangs bounced a formation of about 30 Nazis and gave them a good licking before chasing them away. Lieut. Leonard E. Jackson, Brooks's wingman, described how Brooks's plane had half a wing ripped off.

"Planes were everywhere," said Jackson. "This Jerry came straight at Brooks, but Brooks didn't break an inch. At about 50 yards the Jerry broke off to his left and cracked right into Brooks's wing. I thought he was a goner, but he righted his plane. The German crashed."

With two comrades escorting him, Brooks made it back to base for belly-landing.

Announcement of the presence of the new long-range P-51 Mustang in the ETO was not made until after we had lost more than five planes. The development of the P-51 into the fastest and longest-range fighter in the world was another illustration of our technical and industrial superiority over the Germans. The new P-51's speed is up to 450 miles per hour and, with its two 75-gallon drop wing tanks, it can make round trips of over 1,000 miles and have sufficient gas to fight over the target. In the first six weeks of operation, the 354th Fighter Group went on 14 missions, most of them long-range escort work, and destroyed 41 enemy planes, probably destroyed 13 others, and damaged 33. Six Mustangs were lost, none to enemy air action.

LONDON, *12 January 1944*. General Montgomery presided at a full-scale Commanders' Meeting at which he outlined

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tresses' crews were sure he had destroyed from four to six. Howard's plane, *Ding Hao,* miraculously had only one bullet hole in it. Combat movies and other testimony later established the figure at four certain with two probable. For this courageous feat, Major Howard was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.



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the proposed plan of employment for Operation OVERLORD. His plan involved basic changes from the original plan issued by COSSAC (Chiefs of Staff Supreme Allied Command). It is expected that the planning directive will be in our hands by 1 February, at which time the Ninth Air Force and the First U.S. Army will plan directly with each other.

At this meeting General Montgomery clarified his exact position with reference to the American forces. There had been a certain amount of discussion about whether General Montgomery would have command over the American forces. His opening remarks indicated that such might be the case, but after an intermission, during which he and General Bradley were seen in discussion, General Montgomery made his position clear. He would command the British and Canadian troops, but he would suggest to General Bradley the scheme of maneuver for American troops. During a discussion of the airborne plans, General Bradley stated emphatically that the employment of the two U.S. airborne divisions was absolutely essential to the success of the invasion.

ASCOT, *14 January 1944.* Many problems of the Ninth Air Force were discussed with Lieut. Gen. Barney Giles, Chief of Staff, Army Air Forces, here from Washington. Our two biggest difficulties are shortage of personnel and airplanes. The strength of the Ninth Air Force on 1 January should have been 115,000; it was approximately 70,000.

BOXTED, *21 January 1944.* Flew here and awarded some sixty decorations to the 354th Fighter Group. The group commander, Kenneth Martin, was informed of his promotion to full colonel. He and Major Howard were awarded the D.F.C. Major Howard, a lanky fellow well over 6 feet, looks like anything but a fighter pilot. He is 30 years old and before joining the Flying Tigers in Burma was in the Navy, flying off the *Lexington, Wasp,* and *Enterprise.* He is very quiet and unassuming but an A1 air commander.



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Ascot, *22 January 1944*. Brig. Gen. James B. Newman, who will command the Engineer Command of the Ninth Air Force, reported for duty.

Ascot, *25 January 1944*. A guest of the Air Council at luncheon in honor of General Eisenhower, who arrived in England recently to take supreme command of the Allied forces for the invasion.

Ascot, *31 January 1944*. Favorable weather the last three days of the month enabled the RAF and Eighth and Ninth Air Forces to operate at maximum effort. The Eighth Air Force sent 800 Fortresses and Liberators, escorted by the 354th Mustangs and other long-range fighters, to Frankfurt, and followed up with two strong forces to Brunswick and Hanover. The Marauders and fighter-bombers supplemented these attacks with operations on the Pas-de-Calais area. At night the RAF bombed Berlin three times, inflicting heavy damage with widespread fires.

Brig. Gen. O. P. Weyland, Texas A & M graduate, reported for duty as a Fighter Wing commander. I named him commanding General of the XIX Tactical Air Command, which will support General Patton's Third Army. After a talk with Colonel Art Salisbury, my old 57th Fighter Group commander in the desert, I decided to request his transfer to the Ninth to command a Fighter Wing. He is here on temporary duty from Italy to give instruction on fighter-bomber technique. He praised the P-47 Thunderbolt as a fighter-bomber and cautioned me not to underestimate it in comparison with the P-51 Mustang. It is a rugged airplane and can take terrific punishment.

Ascot, *3 February 1944*. Air Marshal Coningham, my old friend from the desert, who has taken over RAF's Second Tactical Air Force, visited me, and I feel sure that from now on the relations with AEAF will be much pleasanter. In the evening Bill Courtney of *Collier's* came for dinner and talked



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about his two years with the German Army prior to November 1941. The Eight's heavies, with the 354th Fighters forming part of the escort, went to the Wilhelmshaven U-boat base, and the Marauders attacked targets in the Pas-de-Calais, followed by the RAF's Bostons, Mitchells, Mosquitoes, and Typhoons.

STANMORE, ENGLAND, *4 February 1944.* ACM Leigh-Mallory agreed at AEAF commanders' meeting to ask for the inclusion of key railway installations in northern France, eastern Belgium, and northwestern Germany as Marauder targets. I was particularly anxious to get more marshaling yards for targets in order to throw a heavier load on the enemy's transportation system and build up congestion in railroad yards to make them juicier targets.

It is the same dispute that has continued since fall. The displaced governments expect us to win an air war without hurting their homelands. Unfortunately, that is where the enemy and some of his most vital industries are located.

ASCOT, *7 February 1944.* The 391st Medium Bomb Group, commanded by Col. G. E. Williams, and two fighter groups —the 366th, commanded by Col. Dyke Meyer, and the 368th, commanded by Lieut. Col. Gil Meyers—have arrived. The two fighter groups are Thunderbolt-trained and have about 16 P-47s each.

ASCOT, *9 February 1944.* Two Marauder missions to Pas-de-Calais, now being called "the rocket-gun coast," though not in print. I asked for a report on the availability of rockets, both British and American, for our fighter-bombers. I am very anxious to equip our Mustangs with rocket-firing equipment if we can get the rocket projectiles.

ASCOT, *10 February 1944.* General Spaatz and Col. Elliott Roosevelt came to luncheon, and afterwards a conference was held on photographic reconnaissance problems. It was agreed



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that all strategic photographic reconnaissance would be co-ordinated under USSTAF in order to avoid duplication.

ASCOT, *11 February 1944*. The 354th Group lost its commander today when Colonel Kenneth Martin, after shooting down one plane, collided head-on with a Me-109 and crashed.[3]

[3] LATER: Colonel Martin, who became a prisoner-of-war and escaped when we overran Germany in April 1945, visited me at my headquarters at Maisons Laffitte, France, and gave me an interesting account of his experiences, which I repeat here. "After shooting down one enemy fighter," Colonel Martin recalled, "I closed with an Me-109. In a head-on pass we fired point-blank at each other until the two planes met with fuselages approximately 50 to 100 feet apart and on the same level. I fell from 25,000 feet to approximately 8,000 feet before being able to open my parachute. I was covered with blood and my left arm was smashed. On landing I fell in a crumpled heap, as my right leg and left foot were broken either in the crash or on landing. The villagers who ran to me treated me gently and took me to the village hospital where I was given a shot of morphine. I was carried up three flights of stairs to the room of the German pilot, who also miraculously escaped with minor injuries. After a few motions indicating our head-on pass, I was carried back downstairs and placed in another wing, where I stayed for four days. The treatment by the civilian nurses was as good as they could provide. The military then took over and carted me on a 10-hour trip to their interrogation hospital at Halmark, Germany. During this trip I wondered how I could survive, as part of the time I rode in an open baggage car behind the engine on a cold February day. The next day saw the start of five weeks of solitary confinement on a minimum of rations. Interrogations came every day. They varied from polite, gentlemanly talks to implied threats of refusing to identify me, or of turning me over to the Gestapo; or they promised me better hospital care and food if I talked. They were very much interested in finding out the size and composition of the Ninth Air Force, which was newly formed. During this time the Allied Air Forces leveled Frankfurt, not far away, and during the raids the guards locked me in my room and went to air-raid shelters. On the twelfth day, while resetting my broken arm, they kept me conscious by controlling the amount of anesthetic so as to allow



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ASCOT, *13 February 1944.* Last night London experienced its first serious air attack in a long time. Fortresses and Liberators, 400 strong, joined 200 Marauders, under an umbrella of Mustangs and Thunderbolts, in hitting the Pas-de-Calais secret-weapon targets.

ASCOT, *15 February 1944.* Five Marauder groups, numbering 388 planes, biggest medium attack yet, went after the CROSSBOW targets again. The RAF continued the assault on Berlin, dropping 2,800 tons on the German capital. In the evening I was the guest of Lord Trenchard, together with a group of 20 American air commanders.

Advance Headquarters, Ninth Air Force set up at Uxbridge with General Schlatter in command. This is the combined Ninth Air Force—Second Tactical Air Force (RAF) Hqs. for the invasion.

ASCOT, *18 February 1944.* The Ninth Air Force was removed from the "question mark" class today with the official announcement by SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force) that elements of the Ninth were now operating from England. With approximately 100,000 troops in England, all wearing the Ninth Air Force patch, it was never clear why the transfer of the Ninth was kept on the "secret" list.

Last night the Luftwaffe sent over 90 bombers, 20 penetrating the London area for the second attack on London in five days. Fire of the city's ack ack defenses could be heard

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me to talk while they conducted an interrogation. Medical care was very slim, and four times during confinement my head wound became infected. After pounding on my door to attract attention, I finally got them to give me sulfa, and the injury healed. After five weeks I was finally allowed to go upstairs and mingle with the other prisoners. Later I was transferred to Obermasfeld and then to Sagen, where I spent eight months. When the Russians broke through, we were taken to Nürnberg, and shortly thereafter escaped.



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out in Ascot. Searchlights lit up the skies and air battles could be seen overhead.

ASCOT, *20 February 1944.* The 354th Mustang Group escorted the Fortresses to Leipzig, a 1,100-mile round trip, longest fighter escort trip ever made.

ASCOT, *21 February 1944.* Destroying 11 enemy fighters today, the 354th Group raised its total to 103 destroyed in 83 days, breaking the former record of 86 days for the first hundred victories set by Col. Hubert Zemke's Thunderbolt group. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and given command of the 354th, James H. Howard dedicated the 100th victory (scored by Capt. Robert W. Stephens, St. Louis) to the North American Aviation Corporation, manufacturers of the Mustang. "We feel that our record has been achieved through the use of the finest fighter airplane in the world," said Colonel Howard, "and are grateful to all of those who had a hand in making it."

ASCOT, *22 February 1944.* Brig. Gen. Paul L. Williams reported from the Mediterranean Theater and was assigned command of the Ninth Troop Carrier Command, succeeding Brig. Gen. Ben Giles, who goes to Cairo. Brig. Gen. Harold L. Clark, who commanded the 52nd Troop Carrier Wing in the Mediterranean, also reported.

The Luftwaffe continued its "junior Blitz" over London last night with 80 out of 150 bombers getting through to the London area. Thirteen enemy planes were shot down.

STANMORE, *23 February 1944.* Air Marshal Coningham brought up at the AEAF commanders' meeting the operational difficulties the Second TAF was having with Mustangs. Among them are oil slinging from the propeller and from the oil breather, failure of guns, and trouble with the oxygen. I suggested that Second TAF send some engineering personnel to the 354th Group to see how we are solving these



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problems. Returned to Ascot via London, where I attended a reception at the Soviet Embassy in honor of the 25th Anniversary of the Red Army. I shook hands with the Russian ambassador, had some caviar and champagne, and left.

ASCOT, *26 February 1944.* The following estimate of the enemy situation in late February follows:

*General Situation.*

(1) Facing a rapidly deteriorating situation on the Russian front, with little hope of immediately regaining the offensive there, the German General Staff appears to have turned to the west as the one remaining battlefield where Germany can still win a positive military victory. To gather adequate strategic reserves for the coming invasion, the enemy is withdrawing to shorter lines in Poland, thinning out the Balkan garrison, and inducting foreigners and prisoners-of-war in greater numbers than ever before. At the same time he has stopped the rotation of his offensive divisions from rest areas in France to Russia. The steady flow of battle-worn divisions from the east to France, however, continues as before and the total number of divisions in the west has risen from forty to fifty-three. Unless the enemy is faced with complete disaster in Russia, this man-power build-up is likely to continue until a total of sixty divisions is reached, probably some time in March 1944. At present his policy in Italy is to delay and contain, using reserves from the south of France sparingly. Thus, by accepting the risk entailed in withdrawing ten to fifteen divisions from Russia for a period of four months, the enemy hopes to achieve another Dunkirk.

(2) *Air.* The total operational strength of the GAF at present is approximately 4,872 aircraft of all types. An additional reserve of some 700 aircraft, mainly fighters, is believed to exist. Although the enemy continues to increase his fighter force for the defense of Germany against air attacks from Britain and the Mediterranean, an "invasion air reserve" of at least 500 fighter-type aircraft will probably be maintained. There are 164 airfields in France from which the enemy can operate his airforce against the invasion area.

(3) *Naval.* The loss of the pocket-battleship *Scharnhorst,* coupled with the sinking of four (or more) latest-type destroyers



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by the British Navy, has further crippled a harbor-bound fleet which at the present time gives no indication of large-scale activity. Intensive submarine warfare, submarine mining, and sorties by light naval craft are likely to be the extent of the enemy's naval activity in resisting invasion. For these operations the enemy will have available 80 to 100 submarines over 300-ton class and 25 submarines under 300-ton class.

*Situation in Western Europe.*

(1) Tactically disposed in France and the Lowlands, at present, the enemy has a known total of 53 divisions. Twenty-two of these divisions hold defensive sectors along the Atlantic coast, 22 divisions are located in the interior, 6 along the Mediterranean coast, and 3 are unlocated.

(2) Along the Channel coast between the Loire River and the Franco-Belgian frontier, 16 defensive divisions are in or immediately behind coastal fortifications. In support of this defensive force, the enemy has a mobile reserve of 8 offensive SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions.

*Enemy Dispositions:*

(1) *Underwater Obstacles.* Experiments with steel underwater obstacles were reported on the east coast of the Cotentin Peninsula in the early months of 1943. These consisted of steel tetrahedra and curved rails for short stretches along the beach in the vicinity of Quinéville. Provided the necessary personnel and stores were available, wire could be erected and land and naval mines laid at the rate of approximately one thousand yards in three hours.

*Air:*

(1) The enemy will have immediately available some 1350 aircraft to oppose our landing. By D-plus-1 this force may be increased by another 300 aircraft. This force may be made up as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Long-range Bombers | 550 |
| Fighter Bombers | 70 |
| Single-engined Fighters | 400 |
| Twin-engined Fighters | 220 |
| Reconnaissance | 110 |
| Total | 1,350 |



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The reinforcements on D-day to D-plus-1 may be made up as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Single-engined Fighters | 200 |
| Twin-engined Fighters | 100 |
| Total | 300 |

ASCOT, *28 February 1944.* Nazi propaganda is spreading rumors of fantastic secret weapons which Hitler will soon loose against England, and our intelligence agents are busy these days sifting the ridiculous from the real. These rumors usually emanate from Ankara, Berne, Stockholm, or Lisbon. One rumor had it that the Germans were developing an infrared searchlight that would penetrate clouds, smoke, dust, and haze and spot Allied bombers enroute to the Reich. Another report was circulated that the Nazis had developed a nonpoisonous gas which would be laid over London by a fleet of bombers. The gas would cling to the city's buildings. Then rockets would be fired from the Pas-de-Calais area, ignite the gas, and blow London off the map. These rumors are designed to spread terror among the populace. They cannot all be laughed at. Some of them are true. For instance, the Germans have made remarkable strides in jet-propulsion. There also is definite evidence that there is something to fear from the Germans' possible development of rocket guns or projectiles.

Real fear is felt in high circles that the Germans might start bacteriological warfare. The prospect of a calamity like this is enough to frighten everybody.

ASCOT, *29 February 1944.* Reconnaissance and other reports show that our air offensive is beginning to punish the Germans severely. Photographs indicate that the Germans' single-engine fighter protection has been reduced 60 percent. In furious battles over Germany in the first part of February the combined Allied air forces downed 664 planes—153 more than the Germans' costliest week in the Battle of Britain three years ago. Our losses were 387 heavies, 37 fighters, and



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14 mediums. By the month's end, the German fighter opposition dropped sharply.

STANMORE, *1 March 1944.* ACM Leigh-Mallory believes, and I concur, that it is of utmost importance that more attacks be made on enemy marshaling yards and communication centers in preparation for OVERLORD. Therefore, when the Eighth Air Force is not operating, the main medium-bomber effort should be on marshaling yards with, at the same time, a moderate effort on NO BALL targets.

The Luftwaffe raided England again last night. Only six planes got through to London and damage was slight. Twenty-eight planes dropped scattered bombs on Kent, Surrey, and Essex. Accounts of these raids are being broadcast over Radio Calais, telling of hundreds of bombers spreading destruction in London. The Germans' psychology puzzles me. Whom are they fooling?

GOSFIELD, *2 March 1944.* Inspected the 365th Fighter Group and found conditions very unsatisfactory. When the Group returned from a mission in support of the Eighth Air Force to Frankfurt, I talked to the commanding officer, whose attitude was brusk and discourteous. Whether he was showing undue irritability and fatigue as a result of the long flight to Frankfurt, I was unable to determine. All my experience convinces me that a man cannot be a good commander in the air if he is not a good leader on the ground. There is not time enough to wait to see whether the attitude of this commander will result in a lowered morale of his group. He must improve immediately.

More than 250 Marauders raided airfields in France from which recent raids on London have been launched. One of the targets was Laon, more than 150 miles inland and the deepest point of penetration yet for the Marauders. The 354th Mustangs accompanying the heavies to Chartres hovered over near-by airfields for an hour and a half, waiting to attack any Hun that dared to get off the ground. None did.



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The Hun wouldn't come up, so the Thunderbolts went down to get him. One group returning from Germany strafed an airfield 60 miles north of Paris and destroyed six planes on the ground. Another Thunderbolt group, returning from a mission to southwest Germany in which they encountered no fighter opposition, dived down to 15 feet and strafed another North France airfield. Traveling at more than 425 miles an hour and with all eight of their machine guns blazing, the Thunderbolts raked flak towers, buildings, and Germans scurrying for cover.

HIGH WYCOMBE, *3 March 1944*. This was the day our heavies were to go to Berlin, but weather conditions interfered. However, long-range P-38s with wing tanks got through for a rendezvous over the outskirts of the city. Mustangs also got within sight of the city before turning back.

Conference with Generals Spaatz and Doolittle at which it was decided that a specified length of time of duty for combat crewmen would be eliminated in the Ninth Air Force. If we adhered to the original procedure of from 50 to 75 missions, the majority of my combat pilots would be relieved at about the time of the invasion. Practically all the rest would finish during the six weeks immediately after the invasion. This would leave us to fight a critical part of the land battle with new, inexperienced crews. I do not anticipate any appreciable decrease in morale. The attitude throughout the Ninth is that we are about to get on with the "Big Show" and no one wants to talk about going home.

ASCOT, *4 March 1944*. Another big attack was laid on for Berlin, but only thirty B-17s got through on account of the weather. The rest of the heavies bombed targets at Düsseldorf, Cologne, and Frankfurt. Mustangs covered the Berlin's B-17s. Crews reported clouds as high as 30,000 feet. At high altitudes pilots reported that the temperature was 55° below zero.



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The Ninth Air Force received its first detachment of WACs: two officers and 56 enlisted personnel.

GREAT DUNMOW, *6 March 1944.* After two failures due to weather, the heavies got through to Berlin today, and 609 Fortresses and Liberators dropped 1,089 tons of incendiaries and high explosives. Long-range fighters provided escort and engaged in furious battles with Nazis who were sent up to defend the Reich capital at all costs. We destroyed 176 fighters over the city and along the routes in and out of Germany. Our losses were 68 heavies and 11 fighters.

STANMORE, *7 March 1944.* Guest of ACM Leigh-Mallory at a luncheon for 30 American and British war correspondents, preceded by a showing of an RAF invasion film.

The new A-20 Havoc, a faster and improved version of the light bomber which is a favorite with the Russians, went into action today, bombing the Conches (France) airfield.

ASCOT, *8–9 March 1944.* Two more major attacks were made on Berlin. A force of 543 Forts and Liberators cascaded 1,089 tons on "Big B," as our boys have nicknamed Hitler's town. Over 350,000 incendiaries were included, starting fires that could be seen 100 miles away. It was the biggest daylight incendiary raid ever made, far surpassing anything the Huns tried in the London blitz in 1940. The Nazis fought back savagely, and their fighters pressed attacks from the time they left Hanover, 150 miles from Berlin, until they were well on course home. Our losses were 38 bombers and 16 fighters, but we destroyed 123 enemy aircraft. Marauder operations were timed so as to strain the Luftwaffe defenses to the utmost. They bombed airfields at Volkel and Soesterberg in Holland near the German border.

The next day 331 heavies of the Eighth Air Force delivered 774 tons on "Big B" and found the Luftwaffe absent. Flak was intense, but only six heavies were lost.

After one of these attacks an amazing report came to me



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from the 354th Fighter Group about how one of our Mustang pilots coaxed and coached one of his buddies almost the entire 500 miles from Berlin back to base. I repeat it here:

Lieut. Edward R. Regis, 21-year-old pilot of the P-51 *Rigor Mortis* was flying over the eastern suburbs of Berlin when his ship started vibrating so violently he could hardly keep control of the stick. He called on the radio telephone to his wingman, Lieut. Glen Eagleston, seasoned Mustang ace flying *Feeble Eagle*. He said: "Eagle, the stick's bouncing back and forth and I can't hold it. I'd better bail out."

Eagleston answered: "Junior, I'll get you home if I have to push you."

It was 68° below zero, and a gray-black overcast was so dense that the pilots could hardly see each other. The pair broke from their group and headed toward France. Regis began losing altitude, three miles in a few minutes, before he righted his ship at 8,000 feet. Eagleston talked fast and steadily. All the way over Germany he kept saying: "Don't worry kid. We'll make it O.K."

The younger pilot had to strain to keep his ship from vibrating out of control. One hundred miles from the French coast, the canopy of the crippled Mustang began to rattle and Regis again radioed that he couldn't make it. "We're just about out of the danger zone," Eagleston said; "another hundred miles, Baby, and we'll be O.K." Sixty miles from the coast, the pilots lost each other in the clouds. Regis flew over the Channel and landed at a field on the south coast. On landing he discovered that the left magneto of his plane was out, causing the violent vibration. Lieutenant Eagleston, who flew on to his home base, found out hours later that Regis had landed safely. Regis, on return to his home base, said: "If it hadn't been for Eagle's coaxing, I'd never have made it."

STUDLAND–SWANAGE AREA, *10 March 1944*. Exercise PRANK, a dress rehearsal for the 3rd Canadian division of the British Second Army for OVERLORD, was held at day-



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break. There was no air participation because weather conditions at the bases prevented takeoff. The exercise consisted, in general, of an amphibious landing with one brigade going in first followed by a second brigade and later a third brigade. The fleet fire support was inaccurate in its early phases.

It is becoming increasingly evident to me that the Air Force must contribute to the maximum in covering the period when the Naval support leaves and the troops hit the beach. I am convinced that a continuation of the disruption started by the covering Naval gunfire will aid materially in penetrating the beach defenses.

CHEQUERS, *11 March 1944*. Guest of the Prime Minister at Chequers, the only other guest being a relative. It was the Prime Minister's habit to invite the senior American commanders to his home for dinner to get acquainted with them and, I judge, to see how they were getting on with their British opposite numbers.

I have met Churchill several times and he always seemed to remember me. I presume he was briefed beforehand. At any rate he greeted me with, "Hullo, Brereton, how are you and the Ninth Air Force?" and then talked shop for a while.

During the evening interesting conversations were held on the Russian situation and its future possibilities, Anglo-American relationships, the effect of our bombing on French civilians, and the organization of the Ninth Air Force. He has an agile mind and a live personality. After dinner we gathered in the private screening room to see a film entitled *Demi-Paradise,* with Laurence Olivier. Churchill walked out on the picture, muttering: "This is nothing but Russian propaganda. Let's go get a drink, Brereton." We returned to his study and, over brandy and cigars, continued our talk.

LONDON, *14 March 1944*. In the dark-moon period the Luftwaffe renewed its night air attacks. Twelve planes bombed the Sussex coast on the 12th, and two nights later 140 bombers, attacked London. The alert was on for more



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than an hour, the city was alight with fires and searchlights and gunfire filled the sky. Considerable damage was done in the fashionable West End.

STANMORE, *16 March 1944.* A new category of targets was given the Ninth Air Force at the AEAF meeting, increasing the list of marshaling yards available for bombing from 10 to 30.

ASCOT, *17 March 1944.* Gen. Ralph Royce reported for duty as deputy commander of the Ninth Air Force.

Attended a reception at Claridge's in London given by General Eisenhower for his subordinate commanders. One would never think General Eisenhower had a worry in the world. He is smiling and confident and inspires the same quality in others.

ASCOT, *21 March 1944.* I am disappointed with the bombing results of the B-26s and A-20s and have decided on a change in bombing technique. Instead of having a large element drop on signal from the lead plane, bombing will be done by smaller flights within the squadrons. The squadron will have two or three flight leaders for sections of six planes each. While this may mean an additional dispersion in the target area, I am certain the quality of the master bombers will improve and the gross errors will eventually be reduced.

ASCOT, *22 March 1944.* The Luftwaffe is coming over almost nightly, retaliating for our raids on Berlin. For every 100 planes they send over, the RAF and our air forces send back 1,000 each. Nearly 100 bombers penetrated London's outer ring of defense last night and created some damage. They were dropping fire bombs and it required all the city fire-fighting equipment to extinguish the fires because they were scattered over a wide area. American soldiers joined in to help the fire-fighters. Seven German planes were shot down,



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a Ju-88 being brought down over the Marauder base at Earl's Colne by an RAF night-fighter. Two of the crew bailed out and were captured, and the other two were killed when the Ju-88 plowed into a parked B-26. Sgt. Stephen Gehl, chief of the airfield fire-fighting platoon, was hurrying to the crash on his bicycle. He got off his bicycle and yelled:

*"Halten!"* Then: "Are you German?" the Sergeant, who was unarmed, asked in German.

*"Ja."*

When the Nazi came nearer with his hands up, his face was bleeding badly. He was turned over to the British for interrogation. The two dead Nazis presented a problem. No one could find anything in regulations about what to do with them. They were kept on ice for four days before the proper procedure was found.

In the fifth attack of the month on Berlin, 639 B-17s and B-24s of the Eighth Air Force with strong fighter escort, including 169 planes from the Ninth, delivered 1,430 tons, mostly incendiaries, on battered "Big B." Fighter opposition was weaker than ever. We are destroying the Luftwaffe on its own terms over Germany. Flak was extremely heavy and our losses were 13 bombers and 9 fighters.

GREENHAM COMMON, *23 March 1944.* The 101st Airborne Division and the Troop Carrier Command staged an airborne dress rehearsal for the Prime Minister, General Eisenhower, and General Bradley. Three groups of C-47s gave an excellent demonstration of a paratroop drop, landing their men right on the DZ (Drop Zone). Before the paratroop drop, gliders skidded to a stop on their LZ (Landing Zone). On the reviewing stand General Eisenhower sat on the Prime Minister's left and I on his right. Churchill was in very good spirits, full of energy and very enthusiastic. He called the airborne men "the most modern expression of war."

At the conclusion of the formal inspection, the men were invited to break ranks and gather around the Prime Minister. He then addressed them as follows:



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"It is with feelings of emotion and of profound encouragement that I have the honor to review you here today. In these weeks which are passing so swiftly, I see gathered here on the English soil these soldiers of our great American ally preparing themselves to strike a blow for a cause which is a greater cause than either of the two countries has ever fought for.

"Soon," he added, "you will have the opportunity of testifying to your faith in all those inspiring phrases of the American Constitution, and of striking a blow which, however it may leave the world, will, as we are determined, make it a better and a broader world for all. I thank God you are here, and from the bottom of my heart wish you all good fortune and success."

Afterwards Churchill was taken for a trip around the field. Entering a CG-4A American glider, he said to the men: "You look very comfortable in here." He has a way of addressing his remarks so that those he is talking to get the impression that they are the most important people in the world to him.

General Eisenhower demonstrated the mortar carried by the paratroopers to the P. M. and made a statement about its range. Pfc. John Betz of Cleveland corrected him. Everyone laughed.

Cpl. Laddie Valek, Cleveland, a member of the demolition crew, was rigged up in full field equipment and told Churchill that he weighed 300 pounds.

ASCOT, *24 March 1944.* Maj. Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg called to discuss some of our problems and what he can do to help us. He is replacing Maj. Gen. W. O. Butler as deputy commander of the AEAF. I have known General Vandenberg since he was a student of mine at the Command and General Staff School. I consider him one of the most promising officers in the Air Force.

BEAULIEU AND CHRISTCHURCH, *25 March 1944.* Inspected the 365th Fighter Group and the 84th Fighter Wing at Beaulieu and witnessed the takeoff of the fighters on a



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mission. Visited the 405th Thunderbolt Group at Christchurch, where the men are living in tents under simulated field conditions.

This field, like many others occupied by our fighters, much resembles what we may expect in France. It is a sod field with only temporary wire-mesh landing strips put down by our engineers under field conditions. There is no housing or shelter. Officers and men live in tents hidden in the trees, and all supply and messing is carried out under strict field-combat conditions. All fare the same.

ASCOT, *26 March 1944.* Our Ninth Bomber Command sent 338 Marauders to Ijmuiden today, dropping 700 tons on the Nazi torpedo and E-boat pens. Although flak was heavy only one plane was lost.

Field Order No. 250 of the Bomber Command contained the following reference to the Ijmuiden mission: "Aside from the purely tactical nature of this target, there is another consideration. The first combat mission of B-26s in this theater was flown against Ijmuiden 12 May 1943. Three days later a second low-level mission was scheduled. Ten B-26s crossed the enemy coast. None came back. German radio propaganda made much of this unsuccessful mission. There is an old score to settle."

The score is settled.

ASCOT, *27 March 1944.* The enormously increased demands for photographic reconnaissance from the ground forces and the Navy and Air forces makes necessary a tight coördination of all photographic activities. Our problem arises from the divided top-side control among AEAF, USSTAF, and other interested users. The whole system must be simplified, particularly for field-combat conditions which cannot be met by the cumbersome procedure now followed. I have asked General Spaatz to help us out, and Col. Elliott Roosevelt, who has had field combat experience in Africa



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and Italy, has been requested to assist me. After discussions with Roosevelt changes in organization and control have been decided but we must wait for approval from AEAF. Colonel Roosevelt is not popular with my staff, which is an added difficulty. However, he has the stuff. I am not running a popularity contest; I want the man who knows the job.

MIDDLE WALLOP, *28 March 1944*. General Eisenhower, who was making personal inspections of all the units under his command, visited Hqs. XIX Tactical Air Command and some of the groups. With him were ACM Leigh-Mallory, General Spaatz, AM Coningham, General Vandenberg, and General Weyland. The Supreme Commander showed keen interest in the Mustangs, Thunderbolts, and Lightnings, equipped as long-range fighters, fighter-bombers, and reconnaissance planes. It was his first look at the long-range P-51s which have been making over 1,000-mile round trips to Berlin and other targets in the heart of Germany. General Eisenhower tested the machine guns of a P-47, firing about 200 rounds. He was impressed by its firepower and concentration of bursts from eight machine guns. A typical field Hqs. was set up under operational conditions with complete personnel. General Eisenhower was struck by the fact that it took only two hours for the entire Hqs. to be completely mobile. He asked pilots many questions about range, gas consumption, and firepower. He talked to Col. James Howard about the single-handed fight over Oschersleben on 11 January. After lunch the party at Thruxton Air Field witnessed the briefing and takeoff of the 365th Fighter Group, led by Col. Dyke Meyer, on a mission against NO BALL targets. Later at the 71st Fighter Wing, General Eisenhower watched the dive-bombing mission plotted on the board and discussed the control setup. He asked what happened when the Army requested air support and none was forthcoming because of prior commitments. General Quesada explained that the closest liaison and coöperation was maintained between the Ninth's two Tactical Air Commands and the



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Second TAF so that in the event of the depletion of one unit the necessary support could be furnished by another.

ENGLISH CHANNEL, *30 March 1944*. After breakfast went to Dartmouth and boarded LCI #494 (Landing Craft, Infantry) to witness Exercise BEAVER. Those aboard included Rear Admiral Kirk; Rear Admiral J. A. Hall, commanding, 11th Amphibious Force; General Bradley; General Royce; General Weaver, Deputy Chief of Staff, Services of Supply; Captain Virgil Korn, Chief of Staff to Admiral Wilkes, commanding Landing Craft and Bases. Proceeded into the bay and rendezvoused with the vessels in the operation at 0820. Opening bombardment fell short of beaches. Just before H-hour witnessed the firing of an LCR (Landing Craft, Rocket) and was impressed by the intense firepower and the damage done to the beach. LCRs carry 780 rockets, each equal to one 4-inch gun projectile. H-hour was 0900 and the initial wave touched down at 0901. Troops were beached efficiently. The second wave consisted of LCTs (Landing Craft, Tanks), and the tanks were beached more quickly than was expected. Other waves following were LSIs (Landing Ship, Infantry) and LSTs (Landing Ship, Tanks), the latter differing from LCTs in that they carry 30 tanks to the LCT's five. Low clouds interfered with the air operation and the bombing was at such low altitudes that the bombsights were ineffective and the sighting was by approximation.

ASCOT, *31 March 1944*. March was a busy month for us. Marauders and Havocs dropped over 4,500 tons on a variety of targets, alternating among CROSSBOW objectives, airfields, and marshaling yards. Six full-scale attacks were made on marshaling yards at Creil and Hirson (France) and Charleroi-Montignies (Belgium), tying up the enemy's transportation system and hindering movements for the defense of the Continent. Fighter-bombers went out on 14 missions, and fighters participated in 4,700 sorties on 27 low-range escorts with the Eighth Air Force, destroying 53 enemy planes.



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In Washington General Arnold said: "Mass bombing attacks against Europe are not mere preliminaries to invasion —they are invasion itself. We are invading, and not at some remote beachhead. We are hitting the enemy where he lives. He knows if he cannot stop us he's licked."

Two fine pilots of the 354th were lost in March. First Lieut. Charles F. Gumm of Spokane, Wash., who was the first Ninth Air Force fighter pilot to shoot down a German on 16 December and who had 7½ planes to his credit, had engine trouble on a test hop. He might have bailed out, but the ship was heading straight for the little town of Nayland in East Anglia. Gumm stayed with his plane and just when he seemed to have it under control it hit an oak tree and blew up. The townspeople of Nayland, many of whom saw his tragic death, sent a letter of condolence to his parents and made plans to have a plaque erected in his memory. Lieut. Wau Kau Kong, the only Chinese pilot in the ETO, was in combat over Germany when his plane was hit by enemy fire and exploded.

ASCOT, *6 April 1944*. Preparations for the invasion are being felt. All leaves have been cancelled as of midnight 6 April. A strip of the English coast facing Europe was declared out of bounds to all travelers without official business. Combat crews were frozen. British newspapers warned the public that railway schedules might be changed without notice. Heavy materials of war were accumulating on the south coast of England. Counterintelligence crews were active throughout London and other centers of population to guard against violations of military security. Across the Channel the Germans were working feverishly to strengthen the Western Wall. Everyone knew the "Second Front" was coming, but few knew when.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL, *7–8 April 1944*. By the first week in April the Allied Commanders-in-Chief under General Eisenhower had made all the major decisions for the inva-



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sion. General Eisenhower's plan had been approved by the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff. It was now the task of the subordinate commanders to complete all the detailed preparations.

Exercise THUNDERCLAP began at 0900 hours with all senior commanders down to and including divisions and all Naval officers of flag rank. General Eisenhower presided and the entire scheme of maneuver for the invasion of the Normandy beaches was presented. General Montgomery presented the overall plan for OVERLORD and was followed by ACM Leigh-Mallory, who gave the air plan, and then the two senior Naval officers, British and American, who gave the naval plan.

The next day a Command Post exercise was held. Several problems assuming possible situations were issued to various commanders for solution. These problems did a great deal to clarify the question of responsibility and command.

The Ninth Air Force, grounded for 5 days by weather, had a full operational day. Marauders and Thunderbolts, bombing together for the first time, plastered the railway center at Hasselt, an important junction on the Antwerp-Maastricht-Aachen line, and a smaller group of Marauders, with P-47 escort, hit a Belgian airfield. Escorting the heavies to Brunswick, the 354th Group ran into a swarm of FW-190s and Me-109s and shot down 20 for a loss of four Mustangs. Capt. Don Beerbower bagged two FW-190s and one Me-109, raising his score to 12½ German planes destroyed. Capt. Jack Bradley destroyed three FW-190s, making his score 8½. Colonel Howard got an FW-190 in a dogfight in which both planes flew upside down.

SOUTH COAST OF ENGLAND, *10 April 1944*. Inspected three Fighter Groups, the 48th, 371st, and 376th, all of which have moved to the south coast from the East Anglia area. They are now only five or ten minutes' flying time from France. I told all personnel that they had to get used to the idea that they were not nailed to the ground. Once the in-



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vasion starts, I reminded them, the advance of the Infantry was their particular responsibility.

GREAT DUNMOW, *11 April 1944*. General Eisenhower visited a Marauder base today. He examined flak suits, Mae Wests, parachutes, dinghies, and other flying equipment, and was shown strike photos of attacks on rail yards at Creil, Hasselt, and Haine St. Pierre. He sat at the controls of Marauder *Son of Satan*, a 50-mission ship, and discussed operations with Lieut. Col. Sherman Beatty, 386th Bomber Group executive officer. He congratulated Sgt. Laurence Duthill from Lower Salem, Ohio, on his work. I noticed again that when General Eisenhower did not understand something he never hesitated to ask for details. He watched the group take off for an attack on CROSSBOW targets, their third attack in 30 hours.

ASCOT, *14 April 1944*. Bad weather today caused the first lull in the air offensive in six days. In the past week the Germans have lost at least 551 planes. The Ninth's Marauders and fighter-bombers were out every day, bombing gun installations, railway batteries, marshaling yards, airfields, and CROSSBOW targets in Pas-de-Calais. On a long-escort mission into Germany on the 13th, the 354th Fighter Group attacked two formations of Nazis, one totaling over 100, and brought down 13 of them to bring their total score to 221 destroyed in four months.

HQS. SECOND TACTICAL AIR FORCE, *18 April 1944*. Accompanied General Eisenhower, ACM Leigh-Mallory, and AM Coningham on an inspection tour of Second TAF, equipped with Mitchells, Bostons, Mosquitoes, Spitfires, Typhoons, and Mustangs. The day ended at Northolt airfield, where we had tea.

On my return to Ascot I received two distressing pieces of news. One was that Lieut. Col. Tommy Hitchcock, who flew with the Lafayette Escadrille in the last war, had been killed



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when his Mustang crashed near Salisbury. The other was that Maj. Gen. Henry J. F. Miller, commander of the Ninth Air Service Command, was being returned to the United States. General Miller's loss at this time is serious.

ASCOT, *19 April 1944.* Air offensive resumed with attacks against marshaling yards at Malines (one of the main rail lines from Germany to the Channel ports), Namur, Hirson, Hasselt, and Haine St. Pierre, by Marauders and Havocs and Mustang and Thunderbolt fighter-bombers. Airfields were strafed, and in the afternoon the 250 Marauders and Havocs went out on their second mission of the day to hit Hitler's secret-weapon coast.

LONDON, *20 April 1944.* Luncheon with ACM Leigh-Mallory and AM Coningham at which the command setup of the AEAF was batted around again. Leigh-Mallory wishes to place Coningham in command of the two Tactical Air Forces, both Second TAF and the Ninth. I am 100 percent opposed because it subordinates one air force to the control of the commander of another. I knew that this is not contemplated or desired by the Supreme Commander and it is out of the question as far as I'm concerned. It is my opinion that Leigh-Mallory is being continually needled by General Montgomery in this matter.

TANGMERE, *21 April 1944.* After completing the inspection of the rest of the Second TAF with General Eisenhower, our party came here for a formal mess dinner at which most of the living Battle of Britain fighter pilots were guests. General Eisenhower stole the show with a brilliant talk. He has a knack of adapting his remarks to the environment and making his listeners believe he is really one of them. He does not use stilted language. I doubt if he does any preliminary work on his speeches other than to marshal his thoughts in his mind.



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ASCOT, 22 *April 1944.* Our air offensive is punishing the enemy but his fighters appear only occasionally to challenge us. Yesterday the Luftwaffe came up to meet a force of 270 Marauders and Havocs out on the CROSSBOW targets, and, combined with heavy flak, brought down four of our bombers. Six Marauders limped back to England, each on one engine. The Marauder *Lady Pinch-Bottle* got back despite a severed gas feed line. Lieut. Maynard N. Amundson, the pilot, and Sgt. Dale Martin, the radio-gunner, held the broken gas line together all the way back to base.

ASCOT, 23 *April 1944.* The 67th Photo Reconnaissance Group of Lieut. Col. George W. Peck made its 1,000th mission over enemy territory today and received a group recommendation. They fly Mustangs without guns and their mission is to get the picture and get back.

WIDE WING, 24 *April 1944.* General Eisenhower presided at a meeting on operation OVERLORD. The principal topic was the airborne operation for the invasion. ACM Leigh-Mallory has sent a letter to General Eisenhower saying that he does not believe the glider operation will succeed. General Bradley, with whom I am in complete accord, stated that whether or not the gliders are used the parachute operation is absolutely essential to the success of the landing. I am not in accord with Leigh-Mallory's views and furthermore, while I think a high percentage of losses may be incurred, I am convinced that the glider operation will be effective. Leigh-Mallory's view is that the technical difficulties, the enemy flak situation, the range, and the drain on our air force covering the operation would not make it worth while. The whole question is now open for discussion between the Supreme Commander, General Montgomery, and General Bradley.

FLAGSHIP AUGUSTA, 27 *April 1944.* After spending the night aboard the *Augusta* at sea, I took my position on the



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bridge at 0630 hours with Admiral Kirk and Admiral Struble to witness Exercise EAGLE, another beach landing exercise. Rear Admiral Moon, commanding Force U, signaled his force to withhold landing shortly before H-hour. The combined Naval bombardment became very ragged, the beaching was faulty, and the *Augusta* abandoned her role in the exercise. One great lesson was learned by this exercise: ONCE THE LANDING HAS STARTED, IT MUST BE CARRIED OUT AND NO DELAY OF H-HOUR CAN BE COUNTENANCED.

ASCOT, *29 April 1944*. Received notification from the President of my nomination for promotion to Lieutenant General. Quesada was nominated for promotion to Major General. Drove to Farnborough and inspected the P-61 Black Widow, our new night fighter. It looks good.

ASCOT, *30 April 1944*. The combined Allied Air Forces are ready for the final phase before the invasion. The RAF and the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces have a total of 10,965 planes based in England divided as follows:

| | EIGHTH & NINTH AF | | R.A.F. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Groups | Aircraft | Squadrons | Aircraft |
| Heavy Bombers | 54 | 2592 | 90 | 1620 |
| Medium Bombers | 8 | 456 | 19 | 342 |
| Light Bombers | 3 | 171 | 8 | 144 |
| Fighters, Fighter-Bombers | 36 | 2700 | 51 | 918 |
| Night Fighters | 3/4 | 36 | 11 | 198 |
| Fighter Reconnaissance | 4 | 280 | 8 | 144 |
| Air Operations | 1 | | 9 | 144 |
| Air-Sea Rescue | | | 8 1/2 | 170 |
| Troop Carrier | 9 1/2 | 494 | 9 | 240 |
| Photo Reconnaissance | 1 | 48 | 11 | 184 |
| Total | 116 1/4 | 6861 | 224 1/2 | 4104 |

The Ninth's record for the month was 9,158 tons dropped by the Marauders and Havocs in 5,224 individual attacks; and



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the Mustangs and Thunderbolts, which were joined by the Lightnings late in the month, flew a total of 8,127 sorties. The Mustangs and Thunderbolts destroyed 86 enemy fighters against 47 losses. One of the gratifying accomplishments of April was the state of training reached by the Troop Carrier Command. The C-47 Troop Carriers flew more than 30,000 hours in a series of night and day airborne exercises.

ASCOT, *1 May 1944.* In this final phase of the air offensive preceding the invasion the job of the Ninth Air Force is:

(1) To maintain air superiority.

(2) To isolate the invasion area.

The enemy's air strength must be whittled down, and his communications and transportation system disorganized and disrupted to prevent movement of troops, equipment, and supplies.

Marauders and Havocs continued the program started last month to wreck the rail networks by attacking Douai and Mantes-Gassicourt in France and Charleroi-Montignies and Monceau-sur-Sambre in Belgium.

FLAGSHIP AUGUSTA, *4 May 1944.* Exercise FABIUS, the final amphibious exercise, went off reasonably well, although the weather prevented any air participation. Some of the landing troops arrived an hour early, which compelled landing boats to rendezvous and wait under range of shore batteries for 50 minutes. Anything like this on D-day would invite disaster.

Concern is being felt over the extension of the enemy's beach defenses and underwater obstacles in the landing area, particularly on Beach OMAHA, code name for one of the American landing areas. The extent to which these obstacles have been increased may have a determining factor on H-hour.

GREENHAM COMMON, 6 *May 1944.* Accompanied ACM Leigh-Mallory to a glider demonstration by the 438th Troop



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Carrier Group. Leigh-Mallory has relaxed his stand against the glider operation. He told the men: "One of the great moments in history is in front of us. It will be the greatest military operation ever undertaken. Recent operations in Burma and the ones that you will soon carry out yourselves show that airborne forces are one of the most powerful weapons in modern warfare, and they will become increasingly important with each new operation."

ASCOT, *8 May 1944.* Thunderbolt fighter-bombers destroyed a double-track 8-span railroad bridge crossing the Oise at Hirson, France, and remained over the target to see the wreckage float down the river. Lieut. Col. Donald K. Bennett and Lieut. James K. Bain placed their bombs flying at more than 400 miles an hour.

The veteran Marauder *Mild and Bitter,* named after one of Britain's favorite drinks, completed its 100th mission against the enemy, a new bombing record for British-based bombers. Since her first mission 28 July 1943, *Mild and Bitter* has flown over 440 hours, over 300 in combat, without an engine change; traveled approximately 58,000 miles, more than twice the distance around the world; and carried 166 men into battle, not one of whom was injured. Sgt. Bill Stuart, a Rio Grande Valley farmer from Donna, Texas, is the crew chief of *Mild and Bitter,* and the man who named her.

Brig. Gen. Myron Wood reported for duty as Commanding General of the Air Service Command, replacing Henry Miller, who is returning to the United States.

ASCOT AND LONDON, *12 May 1944.* Exercise EAGLE, a full-dress rehearsal of the airborne invasion, was held by the Troop Carrier Command. Approximately 8,400 paratroopers and glider-borne troops of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were delivered to their DZs and LZs with no casualties. However, two C-47s collided after the drop was completed, resulting in the loss of both airplanes and



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crews. The exercise demonstrated the readiness of the two airborne divisions and the Troop Carrier Command.

Attended a luncheon given by General Eisenhower in commemoration of the Tunisian campaign. It was completely informal without speeches. A toast was drunk to those who lost their lives in Tunis.

ASCOT, *14 May 1944.* Two distance records were set by our fighters. The Thunderbolts made the longest-range dive-bombing mission ever flown from England when they attacked an airfield near Bremen, a round trip of over 750 miles. The 354th Mustangs escorted the heavies to Stettin, in Pomerania, eastern Germany, a round trip of 1,200 miles, the longest ever made by fighters in combat.

Conference with Generals Spaatz and Vandenberg on the AEAF directive making AM Coningham commander of advance Hqs. AEAF, after the invasion. This is unsatisfactory. Received the full support of General Spaatz, who will discuss the matter with ACM Tedder.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL, *15 May 1944.* The final briefings for Operation OVERLORD were held for the senior commanders. General Montgomery gave an excellent talk. It was without pretension or bombast. He expressed complete confidence in all commanders and said that nothing could stop the invasion from being a success. The King, the Prime Minister, and Field Marshal Smuts also gave short addresses.

The King's speech was beautifully done—clear and simple. He talked more like a soldier than like a statesman. I was surprised to note the clarity of his speech. His unfortunate impediment of speech was barely perceptible. He talked with his hands crossed behind his back and once or twice, when he had to pause, you could see his shoulder muscles tense, as he fought to maintain his flow of speech.

*The tentative date for the invasion was set.* It was an elastic date that depended on the weather and the tides.



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ASCOT, *18 May 1944*. No more printed instructions will be issued for operations. From now on, operations will be on a day-to-day basis and changes made orally. Ironed out with AM Coningham and our combined staffs the objections to the AEAF directive for operations of advance Hqs. Modifications agreeable to both of us were incorporated in the directive and sent to AEAF recommending approval.

ASCOT, *20 May 1944*. Issued orders that no one in the Ninth Air Force was to be briefed on OVERLORD until I have given the signal.

After an inspection of every unit in the Ninth Air Force with the exception of two Troop Carrier Command groups, I made a final report to General Arnold on the readiness of the Ninth Air Force. It follows:

My dear General Arnold:

I am now ready to report to you on the status of readiness for battle of the Ninth Air Force. Our total strength is in excess of 180,000. More gratifying, however, is the fact that our combat aircraft are in place and that the operational reserves are available. This equipment has been made possible, I know, through your personal efforts and the splendid support of your staff. This support has been reflected here through Ira Eaker, and on his departure through Toocy Spaatz, both of whom have done their utmost to give me maximum assistance.

The two Tactical Air Commands, the IX and XIX, are both completely organized and operational. I have specialized the P-47 groups in dive-bombing and the P-38 and P-51 groups in glide-bombing, due principally to the better characteristics of the respective types for their specialties. Some groups in addition are specialized in zero-altitude skip-bombing and with their tremendous fire-power will be a valuable asset in assisting the Hun on his movement toward the East.

The fighter-bombers have carried out some exceedingly successful dive-bombing, glide-bombing, and low-level attacks on bridges, "Crossbow" targets, coastal batteries, and other suitable targets with their protecting flak installations. As an example,



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on a recent mission attacks were launched against four "Crossbow" targets using skip-bombing technique with a force of four aircraft on each of three targets and two on the fourth. As a result of this attack, two targets were marked category "A" and suspended from further attack; a third attack was temporarily suspended, and the fourth was a miss. A further example was the attack of P-47s against the Vernon railroad bridge over the Seine recently, which completely destroyed that bridge. These are not isolated cases but typical examples.

Excellent results have been obtained in coördinated attacks of fighter-bombers with medium bombers on coastal batteries, rail installations, and marshaling yards. It is evident that the flak defenses of important targets will become so formidable that an increasing proportion of the strike effort must be directed to its neutralization. On a recent coördinated attack against marshaling yards and coastal batteries in the Calais area, which is a particularly "hot spot," the fighter-bombers silenced all flak installations but one battery, which succeeded in damaging the leading bomber flight. This battery was silenced after one minute and a half by a dive-bomber attack which was late. Thereafter no flak was experienced.

Escort and support to the Eighth Air Force "Point-Blank" operation has been continuous and first priority, and our recent combined operations against German airfields deep into Germany have been most fruitful. Jimmy Doolittle and Bill Kepner are both most helpful and 100 percent coöperative, and I cannot speak too highly of their assistance.

The bomber groups have progressed remarkably in the last few months. I have consistently held out at least one group for training and have altered the former operating procedure of bombing in boxes of eighteen on one leader. As hostile fighter reaction became less and training was completed, bombing by flights of sixes and fours has become standard except where the concentrated pattern of an eighteen-plane box is required for a specific target. Less flak damage is suffered by this method and the mean circular error is much less. I feel that a 100 percent improvement in bombing accuracy is a conservative estimate, and this improvement is continuing. I quote from a letter recently received from Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory:



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"Now that full reports have come in relating to the recent concentrated effort against special targets in Northern France, it is apparent that of all Bomber Forces involved, those of Ninth Air Force proved to be by far the most efficacious in knocking out these difficult and well-defended targets.

"I have also watched the results of the Ninth Air Force operations against coastal defense batteries, and here again have been impressed with the accuracy of the bombing."

The Air Defense Command is not as effective as I should like to see it. The night-fighter squadrons, one of which I am converting to night reconnaissance, have recently arrived but their aircraft are not yet in U.K. The Anti-Aircraft Artillery units are attached on a temporary basis by the field forces. At present I have thirty-two 40-mm batteries attached to protect fifty landing fields.

The Troop Carrier Command has completed its final dress rehearsal. Their last exercise, a night drop and dawn glider landing, involved approximately 850 Troop Carrier aircraft and 110 gliders, and some 8,200 troops of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. In addition, considerable training has been carried on with British Airborne Divisions, and the results have elicited very complimentary remarks from General Browning, the British AB troop commander, and from Leigh-Mallory. The dress rehearsal indicated to my satisfaction that the plan of employment is practicable from a flight and navigational point of view, and that we have reached an effective state of readiness to carry out the plan. I have no illusions as to the extreme difficulty of this operation. We have, however, the best Troop Carrier Command in the world and its morale could not be higher.

It gives me great pleasure to state that the work done in preparing this command by Ben Giles prior to his relief could not have been done better by anyone, and Williams gives him full credit for the drudgery and grief of the initial training during the worst of our winter weather and with units not nearly so well trained as the later-arriving groups.

The Engineer and Service Commands can adequately meet their responsibilities. Here again I must commend most highly the efficient performance of duty of General Henry Miller. The



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difficulties, both tangible and intangible, of enlarging, training, and operating the Service Command have been met in a manner worthy of the highest praise.

The weakest part of the very involved operation contemplated is the Signal setup. It is complicated beyond anything I have experienced. I feel confident, however, that I can adequately support the vital phase of the operations with the means available and more or less independently, on the basis of my own air reconnaissance.

Night photography is a problem. In order to meet requirements I have taken one night-fighter squadron and provisionally formed it into a night reconnaissance unit equipped for night photography.

As a result of my last inspections which I have just completed, I again wish to express my thanks to you for the quality of the troops and the equipment. They are splendid. My main job has been the instilling of a high combat spirit and the sharpening of their combat edge in battle experience and the technique required for full success in the coming campaign. I feel that I can now report to you, "The Ninth Air Force is ready for battle, sir."

With kindest personal regards,

Yours, as ever,
LEWIS H. BRERETON
Lieutenant General, USA

ASCOT, *21 May 1944*. More than 500 Thunderbolts fanned out in 13 waves and raked a wide belt from the Brest Peninsula to Coblenz, Germany, beginning a series of train-busting missions. Seventy locomotives were destroyed, many of them moving supplies for coastal defenses in northern France. Pilots said that flak cars, disguised as freight-carrying cars, were sandwiched in with the goods wagons. As the P-47s dived down, the sides of the disguised cars suddenly dropped off, exposing antiaircraft guns. Eight P-47s were lost.

ASCOT, *24 May 1944*. Mustangs and Lightnings joined the Thunderbolts, more than 1,000 all told, in another series of train-busting attacks from the Brest Peninsula to



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Hanover, Germany. Sixty-three locomotives were destroyed.

The Ninth Bomber Command, 350 strong, kept up the rising tempo of the air offensive by attacking CROSSBOW targets. On their second mission in the afternoon 300 medium bombers attacked Dieppe, CROSSBOW targets, and airfields in the Paris and Lille areas.

ASCOT, *27 May 1944*. More than 700 fighters escorting the heavies and mediums went looking for the Luftwaffe. A Thunderbolt group, led by Lieut. Col. Frank Perego, ranged as far as Coblenz on a low-level strafing mission in which they destroyed 16 locomotives, two military lorries, and a factory.

ASCOT, *28 May 1944*. The first vigorous Luftwaffe challenge in a month came today when the enemy tried to intercept our heavies over Germany. The Ninth's two Mustang Groups, led by Lieut. Col. George Bickell (who succeeded Colonel Howard in command of the 354th) and Maj. Robert C. McWherter, engaged the Luftwaffe in a tough fifteen-minute fight, destroying 33 planes. Other groups ran the Nazi loss to a total of 54 planes. We lost five Mustangs. Captain Emmer destroyed 3½ planes.

ASCOT, *31 May 1944*. During the last 12 days of May the Ninth Air Force broke all records for sustained tactical operations, flying 14,000 sorties. The attacks were directed mostly against railway yards, communication lines, bridges, locomotives, and rolling stock, all the way from the Brest Peninsula across northern France and the Low Countries deep into the heart of Germany. More than 200 locomotives and countless rolling stock were destroyed. The air attacks snarled up the enemy's transportation system, causing tremendous traffic problems. Airfields across France and Belgium were bombed daily. Our pilots came back with tales of enemy pilots who were crude and inexperienced. "They seemed a stupid bunch," remarked a Mustang pilot.



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ASCOT, *1 June 1944*. All plans for the Big Show have been completed. The invasion is only a matter of days and hours away. It is almost beyond comprehension how much work went into the planning for the invasion. Ninth Air Force's plan for Operation NEPTUNE alone—that part of OVERLORD that has to do with the landing on the Continent—consisted of 847,500 words covering 1,376 pages of legal-size paper using both sides. It was 4½ inches thick and weighed 10 pounds, three ounces. It covered all aspects of the invasion: beach appreciation, outline mounting plan, weather, order of battle, joint fire support plan, cover plan, employment of airborne troops, air lift, bridge and road construction, artillery policy, air-sea rescue, assignment of tactical missions, evacuation of wounded, and many other subjects.

MIDDLE WALLOP, *2 June 1944*. Attended the briefing of the Wing and Group commanders of the IX and XIX TACs, who were told for the first time where and when the invasion would take place. Serious defects still exist in the direction and coördination of photographic reconnaissance. In view of the fact that many additional problems will be confronted when our air forces start operating from France, I have asked General Spaatz to lend me Col. Elliott Roosevelt for a month as a staff adviser. His combat experience plus his knowledge of photographic procedure in the Eighth Air Force should be a great help.

STANMORE, *3 June 1944*. Serious differences of opinions arose in the AEAF's air commanders' meeting when ACM Leigh-Mallory outlined his plan to employ the mass of the fighters in a purely defensive role within the tactical area and to employ all the heavies of the RAF and Eighth as well as the mediums in the tactical area. General Spaatz, General Vandenberg, and myself have opposed this plan from the beginning. We have maintained consistently that it is faulty strategy to attempt to prevent an aggressive



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enemy from damaging the ground and sea forces in their most vulnerable phase by fighter-cover alone. In Leigh-Mallory's plan, no reserve force is held available to meet an attack by the German Air Force or for attacks to neutralize the enemy's landing fields. It is evident that if the enemy should muster 700 long-range fighters and Stukas with unfavorable weather conditions predicted—probably well within his capabilities—very serious damage might be done to the fleet. Leigh-Mallory has taken the position that, with approximately 200 fighters over the beaches and shipping lanes throughout the day, there is little or no danger. I felt that this was the view of a man whose main experience has been in static fighter defense. The allocation of the mass of the bombers on the type of targets indicated for the purpose of attempting to block the roads and highways is also doomed to failure in my opinion.

In the ensuing argument Leigh-Mallory lost his temper and an unpleasant scene was threatened when ACM Tedder intervened. He said very quietly that he was there to represent the Supreme Commander and that he would make the decision and communicate it to Leigh-Mallory after the meeting.

The general air scheme of maneuver decided upon was as follows:

A force of heavy bombers adequate for the purpose was employed against profitable targets which threatened the initial phases of the invasion. Targets to be attacked not only included those which threatened the landings but also those which isolated the battlefield. In addition, strategic bombers continued their attacks against enemy airfields and other objectives deeper in enemy territory. This was to accomplish a twofold purpose: to destroy and immobilize the enemy air force, and by continued attack against the Reich to prevent the movement of enemy fighters assigned for home defense into the battle area.

The medium bombers were to be used for the most part in the battle area. Their targets were beach defenses, de-



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fending gun positions, and communications to isolate the battlefield, including bridges, railroads, and road centers.

A large force of fighter bombers was to assist directly in the advance of the infantry and for the destruction of reinforcements. Fighters were to escort the strategic bombers, to furnish a protective umbrella over the landing area, and an adequate force of fighters was to be held in reserve to meet any unforeseen action by enemy air forces against our sea and landing forces.

The immediate missions for the Ninth Air Force are:

(1) To destroy the remainder of the bridges across the Seine (they will be taken out today and tomorrow); and
(2) to neutralize the enemy's movement by hitting railroad and road junctions.

The importance of this can be seen from the following G-2 estimate:

By afternoon of D-day the Germans can muster in the battle area nine divisions, of which two are first-line Panzer divisions, against six and a fraction that we can put on the beaches. On D-plus-2 the enemy can have in the battle area 13 divisions, of which five will be Panzers, against our ten divisions. On D-plus-7 they can have 24 divisions, nine of them Panzers, against approximately 18 of ours. Considering the fact that the enemy's supplies are already spotted in the battle area, whereas we are faced with the necessity of overseas lift to only one port of entry, moving supplies across the beaches, to say nothing of the predicted bad weather, it can be seen that the two questions—denial of enemy air interference, and delay to enemy ground forces—will be the deciding factors of the invasion.

On the night of D-minus-1 a broadcast will be made over the "Black Market" radio telling the people within 80 miles of the Normandy coast to leave their homes at once and to stay away from roads and railroads, and from German troop movements. Leaflets will be dropped in the battle areas on D-minus-1.



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Unless D-day is changed, it now appears that the weather at H-hour will be such that all heavy and medium attacks must be done under instrument bombing conditions.

UXBRIDGE AND ASCOT, *4 June 1944*. Postponement of at least 24 hours in D-day because of weather was announced at the combined operations conference at Advance Hqs. of AEAF. It is evident that General Eisenhower faces one of the most difficult decisions in military history in naming the new date for D-day and H-hour.

As far as the Ninth Air Force is concerned, the invasion started back in May when we went to work on our twofold program of maintaining air superiority and isolating the battlefield. From 15 May through 4 June, the Ninth conducted 2,253 sorties against 34 hostile airfields within a radius of 130 miles of the battle area, and the Luftwaffe was attacked wherever it could be found in the air or on the ground. To prevent the enemy's movement, 2,791 sorties were flown in which 35 bridges were destroyed or damaged and numerous marshaling yards severely damaged.

In addition to these two missions, the Ninth executed a diversionary plan to disguise our intentions. The battle area for Operation NEPTUNE is bounded on the north by the Seine River, on the east by a series of railway bridges extending from Paris to Orléans (referred to as the Paris-Orléans Gap), and on the south by the Loire River. In order not to compromise our intentions no attention could be paid to the bridges over the Loire of the Paris-Orléans Gap. Attacks on the highway and railroad bridges over the Seine could be interpreted by the enemy in two ways:

(1) Either we wished to keep those forces south of the Seine from entering the Pas-de-Calais; or

(2) we wished to keep the forces in the Calais area from moving into the Normandy area.

For each attack made in the Normandy area (except attacks on the Seine bridges), approximately two attacks were made in the area to the north. This was designed to confuse



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the enemy as to our plans. Attacks on the Seine bridges were interspersed with similar attacks to the north and east, generally along the Meuse and Oise to further mislead the enemy.

Col. Elliott Roosevelt reported for duty and was given carte blanche to make whatever changes are necessary in the Photographic Reconnaissance units to raise the standard of their performance.

ASCOT AND UXBRIDGE, *5 June 1944.* At 0500 hours I received notification that H-hour and D-day have definitely been decided by General Eisenhower and that there will be no more postponements.[4]

The AEAF commanders' meeting revealed no change in the enemy situation. Counterintelligence indicates that our secret plans have not been compromised and that there has been no movement of enemy forces towards the Normandy peninsula.

The stupidity of the enemy is simply incredible. Throughout the last 24 hours there has been no enemy reconnaissance of the shipping areas, the North Sea, the Irish Sea, or over England. During this time hundreds of ships left ports in the west of England, and some of them were in the Channel and headed for the invasion coast when they were ordered to turn back. The arrival in ports in the south of England caused overcrowding and increased the dangers from air attacks.

[4] LATER: General Eisenhower had three weather agencies supplying him information—U. S. Air Forces in Europe, the Admiralty, and the Air Ministry. The Air Forces considered the weather forecast for 6 June acceptable for invasion. The Admiralty agreed, but the Air Ministry was in favor of a postponement. Failure to agree unanimously passed the grave decision on to General Eisenhower. If the invasion was postponed longer than 48 hours, it would mean a delay of 28 days for another suitable tidal and lunar period. It was essential that there be moonlight for the airborne operation, and the tides had to be right for the beach landings.



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The only possible source from which the enemy could have received information was a submarine which appeared in the Irish Sea. It was attacked by a Coastal Command plane and believed sunk.

The latest weather reports indicate that, if the present trend continues, the high seas will moderate and the weather will be suitable to put into operation the whole air and sea fire-support plan to support the landing.

Our cover commitments for movements of convoys throughout the rest of the day went into effect this morning. In view of the low ceilings off the west coast and the south of England, and if the enemy continues his negligence of air reconnaissance, it is not improbable that the fact that the movement has started may not be known to the enemy until late this evening.

To make the invasion plan clearer, the following informatory material is given:

Operation NEPTUNE is part of a large strategic plan designed to bring about the total defeat of Germany. The object of the operation is to secure a lodgment on the Continent from which further offensive operations can be developed. NEPTUNE will be executed in two phases:

PHASE 1—The assault and capture of an initial lodgment area at the base of the Cotentin Peninsula between Ouistreham and Les Dunes de Varreville; the development of airfield sites in the Carentan-Caen area; and the capture of Cherbourg.

PHASE 2—Enlargement of the area captured in Phase 1 to include the Brittany peninsula, all ports south to the Loire inclusive, and the area between the Loire and the Seine.

The First U.S. Army, commanded by General Bradley, will launch a simultaneous assault on Beaches OMAHA and UTAH on D-day and H-hour. It will capture on D-day the line Ste. Mère Eglise, Carentan, Isigny, and Bayeux, and thereafter will advance rapidly, quickly capturing Cherbourg, and develop the OMAHA beachhead southward towards St. Lô in coördination with the advance of the British Second Army. The attack on Beach UTAH will be made by the VII Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, with the 4th Divi-



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sion in the initial assault. The attack on Beach OMAHA will be made by the V Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, with a composite division of the 1st and 29th Divisions and the 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions in the initial assault. The remainder of the 1st and 29th Divisions will constitute the immediate follow-up force. The 101st Airborne Division will begin landing in the rear of beach UTAH approximately 4 hours prior to H-hour and will assist the 4th Division in capturing its objectives. The 82nd Airborne Division will land in an area generally between St. Lô d'Ourville and St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte and prevent the movement of enemy reserves north into the Cotentin Peninsula.

The British Second Army will attack on the left of the U.S. First Army. The initial assault will be made by three divisions (British 3rd and 50th Divisions and the Canadian 3rd Division) between Tracy-sur-Mer and Ouistreham. The British 6th Airborne Division will land near Caen. These divisions will capture Bayeux and Caen on D-day.

Enemy information has identified 51 divisions in France, some very good and others purely defensive. The ground defenses were estimated as strong, varied, cunningly placed, echeloned in depth, and strongly manned by troops protected by concrete shelters, barbed wire, mines, and obstructions. Armored reserves were placed in supporting positions. It was estimated that the enemy's total first-line air strength available for D-day will approximate 1,521 planes, of which 881 may be employed in the battle area.

GREENHAM COMMON AND WELFORD PARK, *5–6 June 1944* (midnight to 0300). I have just witnessed the takeoff of first serials of the 438th Troop Carrier Group carrying paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division, spearheading the invasion of Europe. It was a model of precision flying and air discipline. The C-47s, zebra-striped for identification, took off at 11-second intervals. General Eisenhower told the grease-painted paratroopers and the air crews: "The eyes of the world are on you tonight." Before takeoff I talked to Col. John M. Donaldson, pilot of *Birmingham*



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*Belle,* leading the first element, and most of the other flight leaders. They were grim but calm. *Birmingham Belle* was airborne at 2248 hours and the invasion of Europe was on.

Later I picked up Demaree Bess, war correspondent of *The Saturday Evening Post,* and took him to Welford Park to witness the glider takeoff. The first tow-plane, piloted by Col. William B. Whitacre, Western Springs, Ill., rolled down the runway at 0119 with a hundred-yard nylon rope towing a CG-4A glider behind it. Lieut. Col. Mike Murphy, Lafayette, Ind., piloted the glider *Fighting Falcon,* a gift from students of Greenville, Mich. The glider operation went off with precision, with an average of 18-second intervals between the planes.

We returned to Greenham Common to await the return of the first C-47s from Normandy. As the pilots returned and told their stories to intelligence officers, we knew that the airborne operation was proceeding with unexpected success. The Big Show was on.[5]

[5] LATER: Wright Bryan of the *Atlanta Journal,* who rode in one of the Troop Carrier planes, broadcast the following description of the airborne invasion on all four networks:

". . . I rode . . . with the first group of planes to take our fighting men into Europe. . . . I watched from the rear door of our plane, named *Snooty,* as 17 American paratroopers led by a Lieutenant Colonel jumped with their arms, ammunition, and equipment into German-occupied France. . . .

"Down the long passenger cabin I walked to see how the paratroopers were riding. More than half of them were dozing with their heads back against the wall and their feet stretched out in front of them. The others were sitting silently except for two or three who talked among themselves in whispers. . . . Halfway across the channel, planes one by one switched out their formation lights. . . . The moon was almost full . . . visibility was excellent. . . . The small fields looked peaceful with their orderly hedge rows. . . .

"'Are you all set?' asked the colonel. 'Get this thing hooked for me,' he said, as he took his own place closest to the door. They blinked as the pilot threw his switch and before I could look up they began jumping. I wanted to know how long it



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UXBRIDGE, *6 June 1944 (D-day).* The first complete reports on the airborne operation have come in. They are good. Losses were suffered, but the operation was successful beyond anyone's estimate. The Troop Carrier Command dropped or landed successfully 17,272 men of the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions in Normandy with supporting artillery and antitank weapons in the face of what was considered to be strong enemy resistance.[6] We were prepared to accept 40-percent air losses and still consider the operation a success. From early reports we knew they would be much less.[7]

Some of the airborne troops were landed out of the general area. For instance, some units of the 82nd Division were landed 4½ miles from their assigned zone, but fortunately in an area occupied by the 101st. In another case a glider landed on a rooftop, but the occupants spilled out unhurt and promptly captured the village.[8]

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would take the eighteen men to jump. I tried to count 101, 102, 103, to estimate the number of seconds. Before I had counted to ten seconds—it may have been eleven or twelve, but no more—our passengers had left us, all but one of them. The paratroopers shoved each other so swiftly and heavily toward the open door that they jolted against the door frame. One man among the last half-dozen hit the rear of the door so heavily that he was thrown into the back of the cabin and dazed. The men behind shoved him aside and went on jumping. Before the unhappy soldier could get to his feet our plane was well past the drop zone and in a matter of minutes it was back over the water and setting a course for home."

[6] LATER: Capt. Frank L. Lillyman (of Skaneateles, N. Y.), of the 101st Airborne Division and leader of the Pathfinder Group which carried radio equipment to guide the C-47s into their DZs and LZs, was the first U.S. soldier to land in Normandy on D-day. He touched French soil at 0015 hours, 6 June.

[7] LATER: Actual losses ran to approximately 23 percent in equipment and 5 to 8 percent in personnel.

[8] About three weeks before D-day the Germans began erecting poles in large numbers in the Normandy peninsula area. These poles were from 5 to 10 inches in diameter, 10 to 14 feet high,



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With the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions already fighting in the enemy's rear, the first assault waves hit the Normandy beaches at 0630 after heavy bombardment of coastal batteries and strong points by our planes and fleet.

At 1100 hours a visual reconnaissance reported little progress being made on Beach OMAHA. A number of disabled LCTs were observed, and the beach was badly congested with vehicles. The situation was no better on Beach UTAH, where progress was being held up by increased inundation behind the beach line. Artillery fire from enemy coast batteries was weak and ineffective. On the British front, the Canadians were reported encountering difficulty because of the high sea with surf of 5 feet. The British 6th Airborne Division successfully completed their landing and were reported to have seized the bridges over the Orne River intact.

In the landings four fleet vessels were lost to mines—three destroyers (one each British, American, and Norwegian) and one British trawler.

Overhead we had complete control of the air. General Eisenhower had been right when he told the men before invasion: "If you see a plane overhead, it'll be ours." Fewer than 50 enemy planes were seen in the battle area all day. Twelve Ju-88s made a pass at one of the beaches, and four were shot down. In the first 24 hours of D-day the combined air forces flew more than 13,000 sorties.

An Air Combat Control Squadron, aboard the USS *Ancon,* seven miles off Isigny, directed the IX TAC's fighters and fighter-bombers all day. Breaking radio silence at 0611,

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and 100 to 150 feet apart. Our intelligence had complete knowledge of these poles, and it caused us some concern at first because they were in fields we had selected for glider landing zones. General Williams and his staff decided that the poles, while a hazard, were not a menace to the operation. As it turned out, the flooding of the landing area gave us more concern than the poles because we could not determine from photographs the extent of the flooding.



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they were in constant touch with the ground forces and the planes in the air. Planes on patrol were given targets of opportunity and request missions.

Here's a Ninth Air Force summary of D-day:

*Bomber Effort:* During the hours 0517 and 0645 on D-day, eight medium groups of Marauders attacked seven pin-point locations on Beach UTAH and five coastal battery positions. Reports from the Ground Commander stated that the pin-point bombing of the beaches was excellent, and he later transmitted a commendation to the Bomber Command. The total force attacking was 392 B-26s dropping 644 tons, with a loss of three aircraft and claims of one enemy aircraft. Owing to variable cloud conditions, bombs were dropped from altitudes of 3,000 to 7,500 feet.

In the afternoon between the hours of 1340 and 1824, 225 B-26s and 130 A-20s dropped 419 tons on coastal batteries, road junctions, and bridges, and the villages of Valognes, Carentan, Argentan, and Ecouche, for a loss of one B-26 and one A-20. Owing to variable clouds, bombing was from 2,700 to 8,000 feet.

From 2101 to 2125, 76 A-20s and 59 B-26s dropped 270 tons on marshaling yards at Amiens, Abancourt, Longpré, and Sesqueux, and a bridge at Caen, with a loss of four aircraft. Total bomber aircraft dispatched on D-day was 1,007 dropping 1,437 tons.

*Fighter Effort:* During the hours of 0352 to 2340, 8 groups of fighters flew a total of 2,312 sorties, accomplishing planned missions of cover, air support, armed reconnaissance, and escort to Bomber and Troop Carrier operations.

577 aircraft dropped 385 tons, destroying the bridge at Bonneville and damaging bridges at Etienneville, La Haye-du-Puits, and St. Sauveur, attacking gun positions, buildings, and rail embankments, and strafing rail and motor transportation, with a loss of seven aircraft. During this period eleven air-support requests were received from the ground forces, of which two only were refused: one because of lack of aircraft available, and the other being a target of opportunity which was at the time covered by armed reconnaissance.

At 2115 hours the Aviation Engineers of the Ninth Air Force,



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working under enemy fire, had a 2,000-foot emergency landing strip ready for crash landings only.

UXBRIDGE, *7 June 1944 (D-plus-1)*. Although the 1st and 29th Divisions were ashore, the OMAHA beach landings were in a critical state. Fighting was severe, particularly on the right flank where a Ranger battalion finally succeeded in capturing a gun battery near the Carentan estuary which had been seriously delaying the landings. Artillery fire was so severe that the landings were halted in order to clear the beaches, causing a serious congestion of landing craft off OMAHA Beach. Hqs. of the V and VII Corps were still afloat. Upon the request of the V Corps, the fighter-bombers of IX TAC were directed during the last hours of daylight yesterday and again today against mortar fire and strong points holding up the beach landing from the general line of the Aure River valley.

The largest group of correspondents ever to participate actively in a military operation covered the D-day landings from Marauders. They had ringside seats for the beach landings and the early morning movement in the Channel and supplied the world with the first eyewitness accounts of the invasion. The 21 correspondents who risked their necks were Collie Small, UP; Gladwin Hill, AP; Bill Wade, INS; Jack Tait, *New York Herald Tribune;* Gault McGowan, *New York Sun;* Lee McCardell, *Baltimore Sun;* Bill Humphreys, *Chicago Sun;* James Wellard, *Chicago Times;* R. A. Loveland, *Cleveland Plain-Dealer;* Ivan Peterman, *Philadelphia Inquirer;* Cornelius Ryan, *London Daily Telegraph;* Don McKenzie, *New York Daily News;* Frank Scherschel, *Life;* C. B. Irvin, AP photographer; Sgt. Oram ("Bud") Hutton, *Stars and Stripes;* Sgt. Walter Peters, *Yank;* Clarence Woodbury, *American* Magazine; Arthur Bartlett, *This Week* Magazine; Dick Hottelet, CBS; Ed Haaker, NBC; and Howell Dodd, AP artist.

UXBRIDGE, *8 June 1944 (D-plus-2)*. The situation on OMAHA Beach, which was critical to the point of catas-



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trophe yesterday, has materially improved. The rehabilitation of OMAHA Beach was due almost entirely (according to General Montgomery, who had overall command of both the British and the American landings) to the continuing close support given by three fighter-bomber groups of IX TAC, Lieut. Col. Harold M. Holt's 366th, Col. Gil Meyers's 368th, and Col. Lance Call's 365th. The fighter-bombers maintained continuous armed reconnaissance over the beach until darkness yesterday with the specific mission of attacking enemy activity, particularly artillery, wherever seen. Inasmuch as a considerable number of the mortars were self-propelled mounts, well concealed, their positions changed frequently when detected, the operation was long, slow, and exceedingly hazardous due to flak and incurred heavy losses.

I sent the following commendation to General Quesada: "On June 7, groups of your command furnished close and continuous support to the OMAHA beachhead area. The situation there was critical. The excellent attacks and continuous support rendered by you restored a delicate situation." In indorsing the letter to his command General Quesada wrote: "It is possible, if not probable, that their efforts were in a large part responsible for the attack on OMAHA Beach continuing. History may show they saved the day."

The ground forces on OMAHA Beach have suffered heavy losses, but the situation has bettered considerably and it was estimated at noon that the lift is not more than 24 hours behind schedule.

Progress on the British beaches has been satisfactory except on the east flank where the 21st Panzer Division, still in possession of Caen, is showing very stubborn resistance. The British 6th Airborne Division took the brunt of the Panzer attack yesterday and, during the worst period, was threatened with complete annihilation and consequent loss of the east bank of the Orne.

German air activity, of minor importance yesterday,



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showed signs during the night and morning of strong reinforcements.

UXBRIDGE AND WIDE WING, *9 June 1944 (D-plus-3).* General Bradley's headquarters went ashore last night. On OMAHA Beach the situation has improved steadily. Attacks by the 12th Panzer Division (whose presence in the battle area was a surprise) at the junction of the British and American armies have been repulsed and the forces joined. In the UTAH Beach area Ste. Mère Eglise has been in our hands since D-day. The 4th and 90th Divisions have both landed on UTAH, and the VII Corps Hqs. have been set up for 24 hours. In the British area the 21st Panzer Division is firmly entrenched in Caen. Out of an estimated 6,000 German prisoners taken, identifications indicate that the German buildup as of 0900 hours today is approximately 9 divisions, of which 3½ are Panzers. This is at least 48 hours behind our estimates and is a tribute to the air forces' campaign against bridges, rail centers, and communications. As of midnight last night, the Allies had landed approximately 260,000 men, 32,000 vehicles, 900 tanks, and 40 self-propelled antitank weapons.

Although the enemy has strengthened his air force in the battle area by withdrawal of 12 Gruppe from the interior of Germany and one Staffel from Norway, his air activity has been on a surprisingly small scale. It had been expected by the air commanders that the all-out air battle would materialize about D-plus-3, but so far the enemy has shown no inclination to challenge our air supremacy. We were prepared to engage in a hard battle, lasting weeks if necessary, to neutralize the Luftwaffe.[9]

[9] LATER: It is almost certain that Hitler himself was responsible for maintaining a powerful fighter force for the defense of the Reich against heavy-bomber attacks. Nothing could illustrate better the effect of our strategic bombing on his resources than his refusal to take his fighters away from Germany and concentrate them against our landings.



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Our intentions are:

*Ground*—To join the OMAHA and UTAH beachheads. But this cannot be accomplished until Carentan is captured. Thus, the original plan for the VII Corps to advance on Cherbourg has been changed temporarily.

*Air*—The Tactical Air Forces are to break all rail communications along the general perimeter of the tactical area, maintain pressure on major detraining and concentration points, and delay forward movement by creating road blocks and destroying highway bridges. The strategic bombers will continue the destruction of the bridges across the Loire and the rail centers southwest of Paris.

The Ninth Air Force Hqs. advance party landed at Grandcamp-les-Bains and found Rangers still trying to oust snipers from the area.

In the afternoon a luncheon and conference was held at General Spaatz's headquarters at which a complete report of the U.S. Air Forces in the ETO was presented to General Arnold, who arrived today. The difficulties and limitations placed on the 8th and 9th Air Forces by the RAF's domination and control were reviewed at length. The air commanders present submitted the strongest possible recommendations that a reorganization of the U.S. Air Forces be made with complete American operational control. I submitted that the doctrines and tactics of the RAF were not only not in conformity with our own conception of the proper employment of air power but that restrictions had failed to develop the full striking power of the Ninth Air Force.

UXBRIDGE, *10 June 1944 (D-plus-4)*. On OMAHA Beach, Isigny was captured last night and a general line established to the south of the Aure River valley. On the UTAH Beach front the VII Corps occupied the Montebourg area this morning. Progress was made towards Carentan, which will be attacked again tonight.

The enemy bombed our beaches and shipping last night.



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Although only minor damage was done, the Army and Fleet protested strongly about lack of air cover. They are so used to absolute immunity from hostile air attacks that when the enemy does get in they react strongly.

The Ninth Air Force lost four TAC Recce planes to our own fleet flak last night despite the fact that they had navigation lights on and displayed recognition signals. The RAF also lost several planes.[10]

UXBRIDGE, *11 June 1944 (D-plus-5).* The 101st Airborne Division captured the key town of Carentan last night after a long, hard fight. The area was covered with swamps and canals, contained the Deuve River, and was infested with Germans. A battalion of the 101st Division, commanded by Lieut. Col. Robert G. Cole, San Antonio, Texas, fought its way across four consecutive bridges that span Carentan's waterways, and established an insecure bridgehead north of the city. German artillery fire pinned down the paratroopers and they were faced with withdrawal or a desperate attack. Colonel Cole decided to attack.

In the ensuing hand-to-hand action, the 101st drove the Germans back, took the city, and captured the last defenders. Colonel Cole[11] led the action with a bayonet-rifle he picked up from a wounded comrade. It was the first American bayonet charge of World War II.

[10] LATER: Our ground casualties at the end of D-plus-4 were 13,058 killed, wounded, missing, and captured—19,194 fewer than had been anticipated before the invasion. This was due to the extremely light losses sustained in crossing the Channel and to the lack of expected opposition on UTAH Beach. A breakdown of the casualties shows 2,716 killed, 7,756 wounded, 2,542 missing, and 44 captured. The actual losses on D-day were 1,465 killed, 3,184 wounded, 1,928 missing, and 26 captured for a total of 6,603, about 50 percent under estimates. We had estimated that our losses would be about 12,000.

[11] LATER: Colonel Cole, who was killed in Holland on 18 September 1944, was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic action at Carentan.



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The buildup on the beaches is now abreast of estimates. The enemy's whole buildup has been greatly delayed by air action and is dropping behind progressively. His infantry divisions are being committed piecemeal. As a result, his Panzer Divisions, first in action, were forced to a scheme of maneuver which is the function of infantry. Without an infantry force on which to base their operations they have lost their greatest asset—quick maneuver en masse. Consequently, the Panzers have been forced to a defensive role, in which armor is always at a disadvantage. In addition, the terrain is not favorable for armored action.

NORMANDY, *12 June 1944 (D-plus-6).* Flew to the far shore in a B-17 with General Spaatz for an inspection of the battle area, landing at St. Laurent. General Quesada's IX TAC headquarters have been established next to General Bradley's First Army headquarters. The Ninth Air Force Advance Headquarters is being set up at the little fishing village of Grandcamp. Inspected three landing strips. St. Pierre-du-Mont with a 5,000-foot runway, and Criqueville with a 3,600-foot runway, should be ready tomorrow. A personal reconnaissance of the beach areas confirmed the fact that two complete "Gooseberries"—breakwaters formed by sinking Liberty ships—were in operation; and many elements of "Mulberries"—floating docks built in England and towed across the Channel—were off the beach and being put into position.

UXBRIDGE, *13 June 1944 (D-plus-7).* During the hours of darkness Hitler launched the first of his robot aircraft attacks against England. About 20 of these robots were sent over against the Suffolk, Kent, Essex, and Salisbury areas, but only minor damage was done. One exploded in the southern outskirts of London, causing the biggest part of the damage. These aircraft are jet-propelled and controlled either by radio or by a self-contained governing device. Their speed is estimated at approximately 400 miles an hour. The launch-



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ing localities are known and attacks will be resumed on these CROSSBOW targets. The Air Ministry estimates that the enemy is capable of launching 90 tons on the London area, which is cause for grave concern. Our attacks on CROSSBOW targets must be resumed.

After six days of escort and patrol assignment, the 354th Mustang Group yesterday attacked an airfield and rail center in the Le Mans area, destroying 17 planes on the ground, one in the air, six locomotives and 50 railway cars, and several flak towers.

ASCOT, *14 June 1944 (D-plus-8).* Montebourg has been taken and lost several times. Stiffening German resistance is reported everywhere. German counterattacks have stalled the plan to encircle Caen.

In the first air battle since D-day, the 354th Mustangs gave the doughboys on the beach a ringside seat for a series of dogfights. The Mustangs shot down six out of 12 Me-109s, running their total of 351 aircraft destroyed. Captain Beerbower, leading 354th ace, got 1½, making his total 18.

UXBRIDGE, *15 June 1944 (D-plus-9).* No advance has been made by the British on Caen in spite of two attempts to encircle it. Enemy tank action has been very aggressive, and concern is felt lest a sharp thrust by enemy armor may penetrate to the sea, breaking the hold of the eastern flank defenses. The capture of Caen is of utmost importance. Elements of the VIII Corps are landing on UTAH Beach, and the XIX Corps is now ashore between the V and VII Corps. The whole American front is under reorganization.

*Maquis* resistance is growing. Groups have been in open revolt for several days, with complete control in some sectors. Resistance in the Poitiers area has become so violent that the enemy has been forced to send fighters and a battle group from Bordeaux to quell it. Valuable intelligence is being received daily from the SAS and OSS groups, which have been dropped nightly behind the enemy's lines. These



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groups are small, highly trained elements consisting almost entirely of French nationals. They have contacted the French Resistance movement and arranged for them to be supplied by air with weapons and ammunition.

UXBRIDGE, *16 June 1944 (D-plus-10)*. Last night the enemy launched 150 pilotless aircraft, variously called buzz bombs, robots, doodlebugs, and V-1s, of which 45 reached the London area. Mosquitoes shot down 11, and antiaircraft claimed five.

NORMANDY, *17 June 1944 (D-plus-11)*. Flew to France with Colonels Hall, Hobbs, and Jim Henry, for a conference with General Bradley. General Bradley said the support given the First Army by the Ninth Air Force had been magnificent—that we had not only carried out all of our missions but gone beyond our requirements. He felt that the enemy was short of ammunition and food and in a state of confusion. For this the air force deserves the credit.

STANMORE, *18 June 1944 (D-plus-12)*. In the last 48 hours nearly 300 V-1s have made landfall, with more than half of them reaching the London area. In view of the seriousness of the situation, the Supreme Commander has directed (I understand on the insistence of Churchill) that the buzz-bomb targets receive first priority; 20-plus targets have been assigned to the Eighth Air Force, eight to the Ninth Air Force, and four major supply sites to the RAF Bomber Command.

By interception of the enemy's clear-text radio conversations, the following message from German pilots was picked up: "Too many Thunderbolts for us to operate."

ASCOT, *19 June 1944 (D-plus-13)*. V-1 attacks are increasing in intensity. Over 200 made landfall in the past 24 hours, with 47 reaching the London area. A total of 37 were destroyed by night fighters. The chapel in Wellington Bar-



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racks was destroyed, causing over 300 casualties. Public reaction is extremely unfavorable, and production in the war plants is being materially affected by absenteeism. If the threat continues, a serious evacuation of London may result.

It is estimated that the cutting of the Cherbourg peninsula by the 9th Division has isolated 30,000 to 40,000 troops at Cherbourg. In the advance to the west coast, the ground forces were strongly supported by the Ninth Air Force's fighter-bombers. The 371st Fighter Group led an attack which brought the following claims: 190 motor transport destroyed, 111 damaged; from 800 to 1,000 enemy troops killed. What appeared to be a regiment of infantry in close column was surprised approximately three miles southwest of Bricquebec and completely routed, leaving countless dead in the road.

UXBRIDGE, *20 June 1944 (D-plus-14).* Owing to the enormous enemy propaganda on damage done by V-1s, it was decided at commanders' meeting to stage a strong air attack on Berlin tomorrow to counteract it. The Germans have been lavish in their claims of destruction wronght by the V1s on London. ACM Harris, chief of the RAF's Bomber Command, strongly advocated the plan to destroy Berlin. He never misses an opportunity to express his ideas about what strategic bombing should do and is always in favor of anything that will help to destroy Germany.

NORMANDY, *21 June 1944 (D-plus-15).* Flew here yesterday afternoon with Mr. Lovett, Assistant Secretary of War for air, General Royce, and Colonel Hall. AM "Mary" Coningham, General Quesada, General McCauley, Colonel Salisbury, and Group Captain Clifton came for dinner at my Grandcamp billet.

Attended General Bradley's morning conference with General Quesada. Afterwards we discussed with General Bradley the air support for the attack on Cherbourg scheduled for 22 June. Later, at headquarters of the VII Corps, we talked



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to General Collins for two hours on the details of the Cherbourg attack. The outline decided on follows:

The VII Corps, consisting of the 4th, 9th, and 79th Divisions, would attack in line to the north immediately following the air attack consisting of two phases.

PHASE 1: The fighter-bombers and dive bombers will attack enemy positions from H-minus-50 to H-hour. Definite positions cannot be given, but area targets will be picked based on hostile fire. The infantry will proceed immediately after the end of the fighter-bomber attacks.

PHASE 2: From H-hour to H-plus-50, the medium bombers will attack on successive lines to the north against definite enemy strong points and batteries.

General Collins understood thoroughly that this type of support would have for its purpose the disruption of enemy communications and a purely temporary morale effect—one that the infantry had to take advantage of quickly.

STANMORE, *22 June 1944 (D-plus-16).* First reports of the initial attack on Cherbourg are somewhat disappointing, principally because of the fact that two divisions failed to advance promptly after the fighter-bomber attacks, allowing the enemy to recover from his initial shock and disorganization. Subsequent interrogation of prisoners revealed that the air attack had achieved a great measure of success. Not only was considerable material damage done but prisoners stated that disorganization was so bad that officers could not keep control of formations.

In yesterday's heavy attack on Berlin to offset the Nazi propaganda about the V-1 damage to London, 146 heavy bombers and 163 long-range fighters continued on to Russia in the first shuttle raid from England to the Soviet Union. Berlin radio claimed that they destroyed 114 planes. Our actual losses were 43.

Attacks on buzz-bomb targets have reduced the V-1 effort and only 25 robots were plotted on the radar in the past 24 hours.



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Ascot, *23 June 1944 (D-plus-17).* Losses from the Cherbourg attack were one medium bomber and 24 fighter-bombers, thirteen of which were P-38s, easily the most recognizable of the Allied planes. Small-arms fire accounted for several, indicating that they strafed down on the deck.

From Intelligence sources it has been learned that German pilots are complaining of fuel shortages and engine failures. This is a good indication of their servicing difficulties resulting from our attacks on airfields.

Ascot, *24 June 1944 (D-plus-18).* Considerable resistance is being met around Cherbourg. Weather hampered operations, but 1,127 sorties were flown, with 246 mediums attacking buzz-bomb targets, and fighter-bombers destroying 99 rail cars and damaging 495.

Ascot, *25 June 1944 (D-plus-19).* Yesterday the German Air Force was out in its greatest strength since D-day. Approximately 525 planes were up, mostly on defensive patrols. From noon yesterday until midnight last night there was no V-1 effort—the longest period of inactivity since the attacks were launched. However, they began coming over again about an hour after midnight and 36 were plotted up until 0600 hours.

Ascot, *26 June 1944 (D-plus-20).* Five fighter-bomber groups are now based in Normandy with the movement of the 50th Group to the far shore. 68 V-1s made landfall, 28 reaching the London area.

An appraisal of the Allied tactics in the invasion and the lessons the Germans derived therefrom is contained in a document published by General von Rundstedt, German C-in-C in the West, and captured by our forces. The discussion was frank and accurate to an unexpected degree. The document follows:



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The following most important combat experiences are to be utilized for instruction and exercises on all fronts which have not as yet been attacked; they are to be circulated for the attention of the troops and higher headquarters in the combat area and for the instruction of all headquarters and defense forces all over France.

Four facts must be emphasized:

(1) Complete air superiority of the enemy.

(2) Skillful and overwhelming employment of airborne troops.

(3) Flexible and well-directed support of the ground troops by artillery fire from strong English naval units ranging from battleships to gunboats.

(4) Previous practice maneuvers by the enemy landing troops, exact knowledge of the coast, its obstacles and defensive positions, quick establishment of the superiority in men and material at the beachhead after the first days of landing.

All this is matched by the quality of the German soldier, his steadfastness, his uncompromising resolve to hold out to the last man whether in the Army, Navy, or Air Force.

All three branches of the Armed Forces have given their best and will continue to do so.

*Enemy Landing Methods in Broad Outlines:*

The enemy hoped to take us by surprise!

In that attempt he failed. Airborne landings began at the western end of the Seine Bay and in Cotentin on 6 June at approximately 0100 in the morning during cloudy, overcast weather with strong wind, partly showers, and rough sea up to 4. Simultaneously, flights by strong formations of bombers were made over various sectors of the front and on rear areas. The enemy aimed at initiating air warnings to cause the troops to seek shelter while he could drop his parachutists without being detected. At various places parachutists turned out to be straw dummies (with wooden boxes filled with explosives). The purpose of this maneuver was to force local reserves to disperse and troops to withdraw from crucial points, thereby causing the defender to lose time. Numerous gliders of varying sizes, carrying airborne troops, were uncoupled from their aircraft far out over the sea and at quite different places over land, according to



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plans that had been worked out in every detail prior to the invasion. The gliders in general reached their points of destination safely and accurately.

Yet these airborne landings failed to achieve surprise because officers and men had expected them for weeks and had made appropriate preparations. As a result, enemy parachute and airborne troops suffered heavy, even extremely heavy, casualties, and at most places were destroyed in battle. They did not succeed in breaking up the coastal defenses from the rear. Only those airborne troops which had been landed in the American bridgehead north of Carentan were pressed against the coastal defenses—by our own attacks coming from three sides, in fact—and were able to establish contact with American troops that had been set ashore and had effected a breakthrough. Thus they received reinforcements and relief. Technique and tactics of enemy airborne troops are highly developed. Also combat training has reached a high degree of efficiency. The men are tough fighters and well trained to adapt themselves to any type of terrain.

It is to be expected that in addition to paratroopers for regular combat there will also be specialized parachutists with special missions such as seeking out and reporting the location of Command Posts, ammunition dumps, rearward communications, etc., carrying out demolitions, erection of obstacles, surprise attacks. These specialists either may be dropped individually or may emerge from troops already landed. These men will keep absolutely quiet in order not to attract attention or to become involved in combat. They must be expected to be well acquainted with the country and to know resources of every description.

The real landings from the sea started four to five hours after the airborne landings. We had thought it probable that the enemy would land during high tide; but he had recognized the strong beach defenses and had changed his methods accordingly, by carrying out the landings at a period of low tide. This was found out by our own intelligence from exercises on the English coast a few weeks before the landings. The new method made it possible for the enemy to spot gaps in the beach obstacles, to drive tanks around them, and to have them partially removed by special troops who cleared paths through them.

At points where obstacles were not spotted in time or were still



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covered by water the enemy suffered severe losses in ships and men. But even in dry places it was observed that the landings were slowed down and the losses caused by our fire were increased by the obstacles.

The landings started at 0600 in full daylight. The landings were preceded by a bombardment lasting a half-hour and carried out from the air and from the sea with weapons of all calibers. The effect was that field works were more or less covered and 'plowed up,' so that not much more than the permanently fortified installations were left. Through the gaps between them the enemy started infiltrating without dealing—during the first phase—with the permanently fortified installations and the large strong points. These fortified installations in many cases carried on for more than a week and diverted enemy forces. By their stand to the last man they greatly contributed to the possibility of gaining time for the new measures undertaken by our command and preventing the enemy from breaking out of the bridgehead.

*Enemy Air Force.*

The enemy Air Force dominates, by the number of aircraft as well as by their range, not only the main combat area but also the approach routes and supply to a depth of 150 to 200 kilometers. In addition to this, the enemy with his Operational Air Force carries the battle even into the zone of the interior, aiming at the destruction of the network of rear communications, particularly rail centers, shunting stations, engine-repair shops, bridges, plants which are important for the war effort, etc. . . .

In spite of the fact that the railway network is highly developed in the west and that innumerable highways and secondary road exist, the enemy has succeeded, by concentrated and ceaseless attacks from the air, in disorganizing our supply to such an extent and to cause such losses of railway rolling stocks and vehicles that supply has become a serious problem.

The closer an area is to the combat zone, the more frequently appear fighters and fighter bombers employed in 'road-hunting.' By attacking in good weather during daytime and with the help of flares at night, they impede any large-scale movement. In the beginning the main effort of enemy air attacks over the rear of the combat area was directed against the highways; by now it is



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directed, in a zone of about 20 kilometers behind the main line of resistance, against any kind of movement, be it on secondary roads or even across country. Wherever assembly areas are detected, an attack by bomber formations is launched without delay. It is therefore necessary to keep a large distance between vehicles moving in convoys.

The location of headquarters is given away by their wireless stations. Wireless stations must therefore be installed at such a distance from headquarters that bomb carpets or sticks of bombs do not cover them. Where there are no fortified installations for the housing of headquarters, their location must be changed frequently. This requires careful reconnoitering and timely reporting to higher echelons, so that the command posts can be found at any time.

In 2½ days 29,000 aircraft sorties were counted along a bridgehead about 100 kilometers wide; of these about 2,300 sorties per day are by low-flying aircraft attacking with bombs and weapons any movement on the ground, even that of single soldiers.

*Effect on Movement.*

Rail transport which has been cut down to a certain minimum by the general situation anyway can hardly be brought up nearer to the front than 150 to 200 kilometers; even this must be done without definite schedule. The routes must be changed hourly, the trains must follow each other very closely if the weather permits, or they must run exclusively at night. Even so, violent attacks must be reckoned with if the transport has been recognized, and the blocking of transport within certain sectors must be expected. Peaks of traffic and consequently the detraining of troops or the creation of supply centers are subject to ceaseless changes and require an extremely flexible leadership and mobile labor forces for quick unloading based on the fastest possible transmission of messages.

*Miscellaneous.*

Strict control of the population is imperative, particularly 'loiterers,' in the battle zone and in rear areas. When any alarm unit is properly employed, the road situation very quickly assumes another appearance. Suspicious persons, particularly young men with 'attaché cases,' may have been secretly inducted.



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Anybody who does not belong to the actual district or cannot give clear proof of the aim and object of his wandering should be apprehended and conscripted for labor.

It is inevitable that during the first days of large-scale combat, units will have to be mixed according to the situation or split up for separate commitment according to requirements. This is simply a temporary expedient. Immediately the situation permits, logical formations and as a result a straightforward chain of command must be reëstablished.

I have purposely had these experiences drawn up in a very detailed report, because many units in the west and also newly arrived forces are still ignorant of the practical aspects of combat proper, despite all the orders and instructions they have received.

ASCOT, *27 June 1944 (D-plus-21).* The German garrison at Cherbourg capitulated today. The enemy put up strong resistance to the end, and during the last couple of days the infantry had to engage in house-to-house and street fighting to liquidate pillboxes and machine-gun nests before final surrender. Four German divisions and a substantial Navy garrison, including Lieut. Gen. Carl Wilhelm von Schlieben (the Army commander) and Rear Admiral Walter Hennecke (the Navy commander), surrendered to General Collins.

NORMANDY, *28 June 1944 (D-plus-22).* Along with AM Coningham and AM Norman Bottomley, inspected the buzz-bomb sites in the Cherbourg peninsula near Valognes. There was one tremendous installation—a giant concrete construction not more than 50 percent completed. I believe that it was more extensive than any concrete construction we have in the United States, with the possible exception of Boulder Dam or similar waterway projects. The concrete cover was at least 20 feet thick and absolutely bombproof. There were a couple of hits on it with 1,000- or 2,000-lb. bombs, and the craters barely scratched the surface. It appeared as if the structure were being built for the later installation of machinery and a launching ramp. No one knew for sure what it was built



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for, but it was our guess that it was to be a rocket-launching site. Because the construction was pointed in an easterly direction, towards Plymouth and not London, there was further mystery added to the site. Some of those who examined it speculated whether it might be meant to launch rockets against New York City. This is not too fantastic. The smaller robot-launching sites were well camouflaged and hard to locate. In fact, the one we inspected was so well camouflaged that, although an Engineer Battalion Hqs. was located in a farmhouse to which the concrete ramp formed a roadway, the engineers did not know that there was a site behind their barn. These sites can be built more quickly than they can be destroyed, and I am convinced after seeing them that they are not profitable targets for air attack. The robots are brought to these launching sites by truck and assembled on a concrete ramp adjacent to the launching device—a simple track on a concrete runway. The initial impulse to launch the robot is given by gas produced from hydrogen peroxide. The supply sites for the robots are fairly extensive, consisting of a number of concrete buildings, generating machines, power installations, and storage tanks for the hydrogen peroxide. These supply sites, which must be located on a rail siding, are much more profitable targets than the launching sites. The supply site we inspected had been seriously damaged by air attack. The Allies now have ashore 730,430 personnel, 119,624 vehicles, and 318,140 tons of supplies.

STANMORE, *29 June 1944 (D-plus-23).* At AEAF Commanders' meeting I again voiced my objection to the improper employment of medium bombers. After a personal inspection of the villages of Valognes, Montebourg, and Bricquebec, I am convinced that the destruction of a town to create a road block is ineffectual, producing no effective result beyond destroying property and killing friendly inhabitants. There is only a temporary delay in the enemy's movement which is practically valueless. He simply brings



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out a bulldozer and clears a path, or, if he is in a big hurry and has no bulldozer, merely goes around the town.

ASCOT, *30 June 1944 (D-plus-24).* June was a great month for the Ninth Air Force, which had now expanded to the world's largest air force. The breakdown of Ninth Air Force planes follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Medium & Light Bombers | 1098 |
| Fighters | 1675 |
| Reconnaissance Planes | 202 |
| Troop-Carrier Planes | 1295 |
| Total | 4,270 |

I fully believe that the combined efforts of the RAF and the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces made the invasion possible. Many ground commanders agree with me.

In the pre-invasion softening-up period the Ninth Air Force, along with its RAF counterpart Second TAF, saved thousands of lives. The medium bombers and fighter-bombers saturated gun emplacements, pillboxes, and machine-gun nests with high explosives. The cutting of lines of communication seriously interrupted the movement of hostile forces. It was by far the greatest demonstration of tactical airpower in military history. The Marauders and Havocs flew more than 8,700 sorties and dropped 15,200 tons of bombs in direct support of the invading armies. IX TAC dispatched a total of 21,653 aircraft—one-third more than in any previous month. More than 2,534,000 rounds of ammunition were expended, and 5,384 tons of bombs dropped. The achievements in June were paid for dearly—164 fighter planes and 137 fighter pilots were lost, and 24 Marauders and 13 Havocs, with most of their crews, were destroyed.

We learned some valuable lessons about the employment of tactical airpower. These might be summarized as follows:

(1) Widespread rail-cutting along gaps and funnels is highly profitable.



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(2) Minimum-altitude or buzz-bombing requires less effort than dive-bombing.

(3) Attacks on marshaling yards will disrupt and delay rail movements for a short period of time. The success of the attack then depends on the initiative of the friendly ground forces to drive through on the advantage given.

(5) Armed reconnaissance is highly profitable. These aircraft go out and search enemy areas and attack all targets they see. This interferes seriously with the movement of even small bodies of troops and transport.

(6) Bombing of towns does not constitute a reliable road block to enemy movements.

ASCOT, *1 July 1944 (D-plus-25).* A recapitulation of the robot bombs launched against England during June: 1,343 made landfall and 661 were destroyed, 390 by fighters, 232 by antiaircraft, 39 by balloons. Over 50 percent reached the London area. The total casualties were 736 killed, 3,315 seriously injured, 3,449 injured, and 2,084 unclassified.[12]

The Allied landings to date have put ashore 800,000 personnel, 130,000 vehicles, and 400,000 tons of supplies. This is one of the miracles of military history, considering the fact that we did not have a single port of any size operating.

Resistance has ceased in the whole northern tip of the Cherbourg peninsula. All the way up this peninsula the Tactical Air Force gave the closest kind of support to the ground forces. It was an ordinary occurrence for the ground forces, held up by a strong point, to call on the Ninth Air Force for help. A typical case came at La Mare à Canards, one of the secondary highways leading into Cherbourg, four miles away.

La Mare à Canards was a typical minor hedgehog position, with three solid-concrete gun positions set on the top of the hill. When the howitzers, flame-throwers, BARs, and demolition charges failed to rout the Germans, the 79th Division halted and put through a request to the IX TAC to bomb

[12] LATER: The Prime Minister announced that the dead totaled more than 2,000 and the injured approximately 8,000.



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the gun positions. The request was accepted, and Col. Gil Meyers's 368th Group was ordered to attack the target with 1,000-lb. bombs. "The Target," said the order, "will be marked with smoke fired from artillery on the ground. The leader is to call in by radio to ground. Our troops will be withdrawn 1,000 yards." General Bradley himself requested the mission.

Lieut. Col. Frank Perego, deputy group commander, led the two squadrons of 24 Thunderbolts, which made a difficult takeoff with 1000-lb. bombs on the mesh runway. In spite of haze and smoke, Colonel Perego located the target and radioed the ground forces below.

"We will drop smoke shells on the target," the ground answered.

Smoke shells began bursting below and the Thunderbolts dived to 800 feet, releasing their bombs through heavy flak. When the last P-47s went in, the flak had quit.

On return to base they found a message from the ground commander that the air attack had been successful with 18 direct hits. The infantry attacked again and by morning took the city.

Late in the day I received an unexpected message that General Eisenhower was flying to France and that AEAF had arranged his transportation. I immediately called his British aide-de-camp, Colonel Lord Gault, and told him that I disapproved of all arrangements and that I would not allow General Eisenhower to land on airstrip E-1 because it was too dangerous. I further told him that I would not allow him to go in any plane but my own because my pilot, Capt. Nick Harvey, had made the trip approximately 20 times. Previous arrangements were cancelled and plans made for General Eisenhower to go in my C-47 *Debonair Duke*. I also invited AM Coningham to come along, as it would afford us an opportunity to talk to the C-in-C about AEAF troubles. Accordingly, we took off from Heston at 1630 in bad weather, were met by our air cover at the Channel, and landed without incident. On the way over I had a very frank conversa-



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tion with General Eisenhower about my differences with AEAF. This in no way involved Coningham, with whom my relations could not have been better. The outcome was that Coningham would run the Second TAF and I would run the Ninth Air Force. Any matters between us that needed a decision would go through AEAF headquarters to a higher authority:

NORMANDY, *2 July 1944 (D-plus-26).* General Eisenhower spent the night at General Montgomery's headquarters, and I brought AM Coningham to my billet at Grandcamp. We had a nice dinner, prepared by French chefs, at which General Quesada and Colonel McCauley, Col. Art Salisbury of the 84th Wing, and Lieut. Col. Bobby Jones, wing intelligence officer, also were guests. After dinner we had some excellent Courvoisier, which had been "liberated" by my aides. In the morning we went to Bayeux, where we attended church services as General Montgomery's guests. General Montgomery read the lesson, as is his custom each Sunday. He is a very religious man, and does not touch tobacco or alcohol.

NORMANDY, *4 July 1944 (D-plus-28).* The little fishing village of Grandcamp helped the officers and men of the Ninth Air Force's headquarters observe Independence Day. A message to the children of America by a 12-year-old French boy, highlighted a program of speeches and band music.

"Your fathers fought with courage," he said in French. "Many have died gloriously, but this will not be in vain. We hope that soon the children of America, of England, of Russia, of France will celebrate victory together. Little brothers and sisters of America, we are united by the same sorrows, the same joys, the same hope. All of us say with one heart: *Vive l'Amérique! Vive la France!*"

The children's choir which had been rehearsed all week by Civil Affairs officers, sang "America" in English. They garbled only one word, "mou-on-tain," it having previously



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been decided that it was better for the meter of the music anyway.

Flowers were placed on the graves of American soldiers buried not far from Grandcamp. An old French sailor blew Taps, and a venerable priest paused in his intoning among the white crosses as echoes of American artillery fire rumbled from the east.

ASCOT, *5 July 1944 (D-plus-29).* I quote excerpts from a letter I have dispatched to General Arnold which I believe contains several intems of interest:

In checking the accuracy of our claims we are using tactical, reconnaissance, interrogation of prisoners of war, examination of damage on the ground, and any other means available. We thought earlier that our armed recce reports and fighter-bomber sortie reports were too optimistic. However, our accumulated evidence now points to the fact that our reports have been exceedingly accurate and, if anything, conservative.

As an example of results obtained: A fighter-bomber group reported on 18 June that it had intercepted a column of German infantry and horse-drawn artillery on the road southwest of Bricquebec towards Granville. The fighter-bomber reports stated that it estimated, killed and destroyed, approximately 800 enemy infantry. Air damage intelligence officers were on the ground shortly after this area was occupied. Interrogation of French inhabitants revealed the fact that according to their estimate some 300 Germans had been buried by the enemy and by themselves. This statement by itself indicated a gross overestimate on our part; however, further investigation brought the Intelligence Officer in contact with the Commanding Officer of the Engineer Regiment, which was first along that road after the battle had passed on. The Engineer Officer stated that no estimate of the dead and destroyed equipment could be given. It had, however, been necessary to clear the road of bodies, horses, transport, and artillery by means of bulldozers. It is quite evident that, while he could not estimate the number of additional dead and the buried, the destruction inflicted was very nearly in accordance with our claims.



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Mr. Ernie Pyle was an eyewitness of the work of the engineers clearing this road. In true ground-force style he attributed the destruction to the devastating effect of artillery fire. So far as can be determined, there was no artillery fire directed in this area which could have inflicted any such degree of destruction.

MARK'S HALL, *6 July 1944 (D-plus-30).* I gave Demaree Bess *(Saturday Evening Post)* and Hanson Baldwin *(New York Times),* a résumé of activities of the past 10 days and a general outline of the forthcoming scheme of maneuver for the breakout from the Normandy peninsula. They are among the best-informed war correspondents I have talked to. Usually an interview with a correspondent resolves itself into a question-and-answer forum. I do not mind questions when they are well considered and are for the purpose of developing a definite theme, but often correspondents are just throwing buckshot around hoping they will hit a target. In the interview with Bess and Baldwin the questioning was logical and intelligent. Baldwin, in particular, seemed to have a keen appreciation of the situation not usually found among correspondents, and I presume that his schooling at the Naval Academy equipped him well for his military writings.

Correspondents are absolutely necessary, but too many of them can become a nuisance. The number of war correspondents now accredited is way out of proportion to the facilities available for them. I believe that Washington was in grave error in accrediting so large a number. They are getting in each other's way and in our hair. As Ernie Pyle so aptly wrote, practically every newspaper in the U.S. sent a correspondent here except *The Dog World.*

In commenting on the correspondent situation, I am reminded of what Gen. William T. Sherman wrote of them in the Civil War. "Newspaper correspondents with an army, as a rule, are mischievous. They are the world's gossips, pick up and retail the camp scandal, and gradually drift to the headquarters of some general, who finds it easier to make a reputation at home than with his own corps or division.



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They are also tempted to prophesy events and state facts which, to an enemy, reveal a purpose in time to guard against it. Moreover, they are always bound to see facts colored by the partisan or political controversies of the day, which are always mischievous and wrong. Yet, so greedy are the people at large for war news, that it is doubtful whether any army commander can exclude all reports, without bringing down on himself a clamor that may imperil his own safety. Time and moderation must bring a just solution to this modern difficulty."

If General Sherman only knew! Now we have hordes of correspondents following every army and air force, and we have to set up press camps and communication and transportation facilities for them. On some days you'd think the war was being run for them.

ASCOT, *7 July 1944 (D-plus-31).* Berlin announced that Field Marshal General Günther von Kluge has succeeded Field Marshal von Rundstedt as Commander-in-Chief in the West. This is the usual Hitler formula: Fire the commander after the battle is lost.

There is no improvement in the situation at Caen, where the Caen-Carpiquet airfield has changed hands several times. The fighting is bloody.

ASCOT, *8 July 1944 (D-plus-32).* The Eighth Air Force ran into swarms of fighters in their deep penetration into Germany, mostly around Leipzig, and 116 enemy fighters were claimed destroyed, six probable, and 33 damaged. The 322nd Marauder Group, out on a night attack against buzz-bomb targets, ran into a flock of night fighters and 9 of our planes were lost.

ASCOT, *9 July 1944 (D-plus-33).* Thunderbolt and Lightning fighter-bombers, sweeping south and east from the Cherbourg peninsula, gave the enemy's rail transportation system



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a bad beating yesterday. Between Craon and Laval, a 20-mile strip of track was cut in more than 20 places.

General Collins of the VII Corps signaled the IX TAC to thank them for yesterday's support. During the advance on a small town a fighter-bomber group appeared unexpectedly and delivered an effective attack even though no bomb line had been established because of the fluid situation. Fortunately, the bombs fell on the enemy. General Collins hinted that he no longer needed communications to coördinate the air-ground coöperation. I am afraid it would have been a different story if, in the confusing situation, we had bombed our own troops. When the situation is fluid, our pilots must have a definite bomb line, short of which they must not attack under any circumstances in order to protect our troops. Air-ground radio communication is an absolute *Must.* Short bombing can crush mutual confidence between air and ground forces.

STANMORE, *10 July 1944 (D-plus-34).* The pattern of the V-1 bomb attacks shows that the enemy concentrates his efforts at night and during the daylight hours in adverse weather. Day before yesterday the weather was good and there were no attacks. Yesterday the weather was bad and the V-1s gave one of the worst daylight attacks. Many prominent London buildings were hit, including the Regent Palace Hotel Annex in the heart of Piccadilly and the Guards Chapel in Birdcage Walk, a stone's throw from Buckingham Palace.

The RAF launched a heavy attack in the Caen area, enabling the ground forces to move into the northwest area of the city. Prisoners reported that some units had been without ammunition and food for more than 24 hours.

Conference with Tedder and Coningham. Our opinion is unanimous that the ground forces are bogging down. I decided to see General Bradley in order to find out in what way the air effort can get them out of the mud and moving.



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NORMANDY: Later in the day I flew to advance hqs in Normandy and, with General Royce and Col. Edward J. Kendricks, chief surgeon, Ninth Air Force, inspected four Air Force hospitals. All were in superior condition, clean, well organized and well administered. Fortunately for us, the clearing stations have operated at only 20-percent capacity. Orders were given to transfer the personnel to the Ground Forces where they were needed. At one clearing station the Regimental Commander was doing an emergency operation for appendicitis, while at another a young soldier was brought who had been blinded by the explosion of a land mine.

Two nurses, Lieutenants Callahan and Parliment, came to our billets for dinner. They were from Michigan. They had an enjoyable evening and a good meal, but the high spot for them seemed to be the hot bath before dinner. I have a lot of admiration for the Army Nurses, who are doing a magnificent job in the field. I am afraid that some of our folks back home would be rather shocked if they knew what the nurses go through as an everyday job.

NORMANDY, *11 July 1944 (D-plus-35).* After the Army Commanders' Meeting, talked with General Bradley and three of his corps commanders to discuss the air support for Operation COBRA, an attack by the U.S. First Army along the line of the St. Lô-Periers road. The attack is designed to break out of the Cotentin Peninsula and complete the liberation of France.

NORMANDY, *12 July 1944 (D-plus-36).* After attending the morning Commanders' Meeting I discussed with Generals Royce and Quesada the impending operations. Inspected Cherbourg and the airfield west of the city in a jeep. The port area was pretty thoroughly worked over, and it was hard to tell whether the damage was done by air action, artillery, or enemy demolition. I should say that most of it was done by enemy demolition. Germans are masters at demolition work, and naval experts who examined the harbor knew it



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would be a tremendous job to get the port working full scale again.

ASCOT, *13 July 1944 (D-plus-37).* We now have 17 Thunderbolts equipped with rocket-firing apparatus. Production in the States has delayed rocket equipment. Informed that Colonel Hall, A-2, has been seriously wounded in the knee by machine-gun fire while on a front-line inspection. Brig. Gen. Ralph Stearley will take over A-2.

NORMANDY, *14 July 1944 (D-plus-38).* Plans for Operation COBRA have been modified and delayed in order to coördinate with an attack to be launched by the British Second Army.

The VII Corps, successfully by-passing the flooded area south of Carentan, captured the German artillery position in the forest which has been shelling the bloody Carentan bridge almost continuously since the Battle of Normandy began. The bridge itself was destroyed early, but a temporary bridge was thrown up and the Germans had it zeroed in with artillery fire.

The Ninth Air Force joined the citizenry of Grandcamp in celebrating Bastille Day in the public square of the little fishing village. At the request of the mayor I delivered a short address in French.

Later a Piper Cub dipped its wings and dropped a wreath of flowers on the tomb of the Unknown (French) Soldier in the court of the shell-scarred cathedral at Grandcamp.

NORMANDY, *15 July 1944 (D-plus-39).* Thunderbolt and Lightning fighter-bombers carried out a series of attacks on railway yards, tracks, bridges, and rail traffic around the rim of the battle zone and far behind it. After an attack on ammunition cars south of Orléans, Thunderbolt pilots reported sheets of flame as high as 4,000 feet and some aircraft were lifted 500 feet by the blast.



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ASCOT, *16 July 1944 (D-plus-40).* General Spaatz called and asked me to come to lunch to discuss a matter of considerable importance. Upon my arrival at Park House it developed that General Eisenhower, after an exchange of messages with Generals Marshall and Arnold, had proposed my name to command an Airborne Army. The general outline is the formation of an Allied Airborne Army, to consist of three American divisions: the 17th, 82nd, and 101st, forming a Corps under Maj. Gen. Matthew Ridgway, and three British divisions: the 1st and 6th Airborne and the 52nd Lowlanders (air-transported). The Ninth Troop Carrier Command and the 38th Group—RAF's counterpart of the Troop Carrier Command—will be incorporated in the command.

I "took a dim view" of this new assignment. We have made outstanding progress in air-ground coöperation and I am eager to continue to work with General Bradley and the ground commanders who are showing increased respect for airpower. My chief interest at this time is to carry on the development and application of tactical airpower.

Intelligence reported that the Germans have moved the 2nd Panzer, 12th Panzer, Panzer Lehr, and 17th Panzer S.S. (total tank strength over 200) to the VII Corps boundary in the American sector. If it's the Germans' idea to cut the peninsula, they are a little late.

SHAEF HQ, *17 July 1944 (D-plus-41).* Conferred with General Eisenhower and General Spaatz about assuming command of the proposed Airborne Army. General Eisenhower wants a plan prepared which would have as its purpose a maximum contribution to the destruction of the German armies in western Europe. He wants imagination and daring. He was very flattering in his remarks about why I was chosen and told me my name had been approved on the highest level—which means, I guess, Churchill and the President.

General Eisenhower was in very good spirits, aggressive,



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outspoken, and sharply definite about what he wanted. He did not leave anything to the imagination—he never does.

There was a lot to be thought over. I knew it would be a difficult task. I foresaw the maximum amount of resistance from the ground commanders and from G-4 (Supply) who would insist on using C-47s for other purposes than transporting and supplying the airborne army. The British had exerted a great deal of pressure before D-Day for unification of the airborne forces with Lieut. Gen. F. A. M. ("Boy") Browning, commander of the British Airborne Corps, in command. I knew that General Marshall had insisted on the creation of an airborne army, and General Eisenhower recognized the necessity for it. He thought that there might be complications in placing me over General Browning, who was my senior. He told me that, if a change in command of the airborne army had to be made at a later date, I could return to command of the Ninth Air Force. In parting, I told General Eisenhower that if he wanted plans with daring and imagination he would get them, but that I did not think his staff or the ground commanders would like it. My mind went back to October 1918, when Gen. Billy Mitchell dumped plans in my lap to work out details for what then was something unheard of—a parachute drop behind the enemy's lines. General Mitchell sold General Pershing on the feasibility of the operation and was proceeding with plans to take Metz from the rear by dropping an entire division by parachute from big bombers. The Armistice cut short General Mitchell's plans. Now, 26 years later, we had the same thing in mind. That's how far ahead Billy Mitchell was.

Ascot, *18 July 1944 (D-plus-42).* Continually striving to improve our technique and effectiveness in supporting the ground forces, we tried out three new ideas: use of "Napalm," rocket-firing Thunderbolts, and radar-controlled dive-bombing.

Napalm—jellied gasoline carried in 165-gallon wing tanks—was used by the 370th Lightning Group yesterday for



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the first time. Col. J. Francis Taylor and Lieut. Col. McKee, flying two modified P-38s for bombing, led the mission of nine aircraft against a camouflaged supply dump and buildings in a woods near Coutances. The tanks were released at 1,000 feet at an indicated air speed of 300 m.p.h., with the planes attacking individually about 100 yards apart. Low-altitude observation two minutes after the last run showed the entire area ablaze with flames rising to 100 feet. The danger and effectiveness of Napalm was illustrated when one of the bomb-tanks was accidentally ignited in the process of loading. The fire was so severe that the P-38 melted to the ground.

The 406th Thunderbolt Group, with 12 aircraft equipped with rocket-firing apparatus, dive-bombed and rocket-strafed the marshaling yards at Nevers. Of the rockets launched, 38 were shot at 50 locomotives and 25 of these were damaged.

Two days previously the 404th Group, led by Capt. John Marshall, performed what is believed to be the first radar-controlled blind dive-bombing mission in combat history. Directed by Lieut. Col. Cowart of the IX TAC Signal Section, the flight was "talked in" on the target. The pilot, who started his dive when ordered, concentrated on lining up his sights and releasing the bombs.

ASCOT, *19 July 1944 (D-plus-43)*. The British launched a vicious attack at Caen yesterday in an effort to unhinge the enemy's pivotal stronghold. The drive was touched off by an RAF attack of 2,000 heavies which bombed one area target. The Eighth Air Force sent in 600 B-24s to top off the attack. Ten groups of mediums of the Ninth attacked defended areas around Démouville, south of Caen. The British Second Army, with massed tanks in the center and infantry on the flanks, swept six miles beyond Caen in spite of the muddy going. The drive bogged down before it could become a complete breakthrough, but it achieved a valuable purpose in preventing the enemy from transferring any armor to the American front.



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ASCOT, *20 July 1944 (D-plus-44).* The kindness of the 406th Bomb Group (L) in a tragic affair came to my attention. At their base in East Anglia the men of the Havoc Group paid tribute to Mrs. Betty Everitt, 37-year-old English mother who was killed in a desperate attempt to save American fliers trapped in a burning plane. The A-20 piloted by Capt. Roger D. Dunbar had crashed in a meadow near the Everitt farm after colliding with an Eighth Air Force Mustang. Mrs. Everitt ran to the burning ship and, disregarding the exploding shells and the fire, helped in trying to beat out the flames. She assisted the turret gunner to escape—the only member of the crew not killed—before the plane exploded. When Mrs. Everitt was buried in the little village of Ashdon near the A-20 base, villagers and American officers and enlisted men crowded the village church. Later at the cemetery a flight of Mustangs flew over and dived in salute. A few days later a sign was hung up at the 406th Group:

Voluntary contributions may be made here for the care of Tony Everitt, age 4, whose mother . . . lost her life while attempting to rescue American airmen from a crashed and burning plane.

Thus £500 ($2,000) was raised in one day for the little British boy who was now an orphan. One private, whose allotments and bond purchases reduced his pay to £4 ($16), gave half of it to the fund. This is only one of many examples of the kind deeds that have endeared American soldiers to the British people.

NORMANDY, *21 July 1944 (D-plus-45).* Operation COBRA, originally planned for today, has been postponed for several days due to weather. Discussed with General Quesada our plans for two-way plane-to-tank communication. Quesada has been working on the development of this plane-tank coöperation for some time. The armored people are very enthusiastic.



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Normandy, 22 *July 1944 (D-plus-46).* Great disorder occurred behind the lines during the night of 21–22 July as the result of two false gas alarms. Some of our units went absolutely haywire with MPs shooting indiscriminately and personnel scurrying in search of their gas masks. One MP at IX TAC, asked why he had fired his pistol four times, replied: "Sir, I know that you only fire three times when giving a gas alarm, but I never fired this piece before . . . and I was kind of nervous." The Officer of the Day remarked: "Well, if each MP had fired his gun only four times, it would have been a relatively quiet night."

The fake alarm started at 2010 hours in the forward area and spread quickly. An American truck loaded with TNT was hit by enemy artillery fire. The heavy cordite fumes plus the casualties from the explosion started rumors of a gas attack. MPs in Isigny helped the confusion by informing personnel passing through there that a 6-hour gas alert was on. The Chemical Officer of the First Army reported the gas alarm false, and the All Clear was given. However, at approximately 0115 hours MP guards at IX TAC heard the cry of "Gas" from the direction of St. Lô, and a second gas alert was sounded. Indiscriminate firing was going on all over the IX TAC—First Army area. Colonel Dickson, G-2 of the First Army, sent out five public-address vans along the main supply routes broadcasting that there was no gas attack. He directed also that no further alarms were to be given by anyone unless the guard giving the alarm detected gas himself.

Talked to General Bradley about details of the heavy bombardment for Operation Cobra, particularly along the St. Lô-Periers road. General Bradley was very enthusiastic about the plans and in complete accord.

Operation Cobra was set for 24 July.

Ascot, *23 July 1944 (D-plus-47).* Two counterattacks by the Germans, one on the American front southeast of Periers and the other on the British front southeast of Maltot, were repulsed. A change in the British-American boundary has



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been made, the British taking over an area to the west including Caumont. This is being done to protect the Americans' left flank when the big push starts. All the roads, except main arteries, are impassable because of the rains, but supplies are getting through.

Regrouping of the American armies is expected after the break out of Normandy is accomplished. It is rumored that General Bradley and Lieut. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, Army Ground Force Commander in the States, will eventually command two Army groups.

NORMANDY, *24 July 1944 (D-plus-48).* Left for France at 0930 hours with General Ridgway. Later we went to an advance observation post at Vents to watch Operation COBRA, which we all hoped would result in the destruction of the German Seventh Army and begin the big parade to Berlin. Plans called for the 1st, 4th, 9th, and 30th divisions of the First Army to attack the enemy's left flank in the St. Lô area at 1300 hours. The infantry was charged with opening a gap through the enemy's hedgerow and forest defenses for the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions.

The greatest concentration of airpower in history was to prepare the way for the infantry. The air plan called for:

A continuous attack by approximately 3,000 planes for 2 hours and 35 minutes.

Fifteen fighter-bomber groups (P-47s and P-38s) were to open the attack at H-hour-minus-80-minutes.

The heavies (B-17s and B-24s) of the Eighth Air Force, 1,600 strong, were to attack from H-hour-minus-60-minutes to H-hour.

A full division of ten groups of Marauders and Havocs of the Ninth Air Force were to attack from H-hour-plus-15-minutes to H-hour-75-minutes. Nothing like it had ever been attempted.

Every precaution was taken to minimize danger to our own troops. The infantry withdrew 1,500 yards north of the St. Lô-Periers road, northern limit of the bomb line. Red



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smoke shells were fired by the artillery to mark the bomb line for the fighter-bombers, first to attack. All our vehicles were marked with yellow or cerise panels.

The attack began on schedule with the fighter-bombers diving on the target and releasing their bombs at 2,000 feet. Next came B-17s and B-24s from England. They began bombing through the dust and smoke stirred up by the fighter-bombers. The weather was overcast and visibility poor. Then from our observation post we saw bombs from the heavies dropping short. Approximately three formations of 12 planes each bombed an average of about 3,000 yards short of the bomb line. The center of the axis of the short bombing was about 800 yards to the west of our forward observation post and among our own troops who were dispersed in the fields for H-hour. Fragments fell in our area, but no one was injured, although several of our jeeps were damaged. Gen. Courtney Hodges, deputy commander of the First Army; General Simpson, commanding the Ninth Army, which was in process of being formed; Gen. Guy B. Henry, from Washington; General Avila, Chief of the Mexican Air Force; and General Royce were in our observation party.

Then the bombing stopped. Later we learned that ACM Leigh-Mallory, who was with General Bradley at his Command Post, had decided to postpone the air attack because of the weather. Once our planes were airborne, it was too late to call off the attack. Leigh-Mallory did not make his decision until 1140, the time the attack was scheduled to start. The decision to postpone the attack in itself was correct because the weather was too forbidding for the type of close support the ground forces asked for. The decision should have been made much earlier.

It was a tragic day in every way. Not only did the bombing by our fighter-bombers and the 385 heavies tip off the enemy where and when our attack was coming, but we suffered casualties from our own bombing. Lieutenant General McNair, who was in a battalion observation post, was killed instantly by bombs from our heavies. Casualties from the short



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bombing of the heavies numbered about 60, with approximately 25 killed. Our fighter-bombers dropped on one of our ammunition dumps, causing approximately 12 casualties, of whom five were killed.

NORMANDY, *25 July 1944 (D-plus-49).* General Spaatz and I returned to France, taking with us General Eaker, Maj. Gen. James E. Fechet, former chief of the Air Corps, and Wes Gallagher, AP war correspondent.

On arrival we learned that Operation COBRA had opened. Over 3,000 aircraft, mightiest air armada in history, rained death and destruction on the Germans' strongly fortified front-line positions. The target was a rectangular area 8 x 4 miles. The purpose of the attack was to break the "hard crust" of the German defense and open the way for our ground forces to break out of Normandy.

Nine groups of P-38s and P-47s, carrying 500-lb. bombs, 260-lb. fragmentation bombs, and incendiaries, led the attack, followed by 1,580 B-17s, and B-24s, carrying high-explosive bombs. Next came six groups of fighter-bombers armed with 500-lb. bombs, fragmentation bombs, and Napalm; followed by 398 Medium Bombers loaded with 500-lb. general-purpose bombs and 260-lb. fragmentation bombs. Two groups of Mustangs flew defensive sweeps in support of the operation. In all, 3,390 tons of bombs were dropped.

Again we made mistakes in our bombing. One wing of heavies dropped short of the bomb line, causing a number of casualties in the 30th Division. One box of Marauders (18 aircraft), dropping on the lead bombardier, fell short among our own troops. Bede Irvin, AP photographer who had landed on D-plus-2 with the advance echelon of the Ninth Air Force and was living at the Ninth Air Force press camp, was killed instantly by a bomb fragment. Lee McCardell of the *Baltimore Sun,* in the same area escaped harm.

Everyone felt badly about the casualties, but we had known the risks involved before attempting the attack. Any time



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heavies are used in close support work, there is danger of casualties among our own forces.

First reports indicated that the ground forces were moving very slowly after the air attack.

NORMANDY, *26 July 1944 (D-plus-50).* After attending the Army commanders' meeting, we discussed with General Bradley some of the aspects of the St. Lô air attack. He naturally was upset about the short bombing and disappointed at the slow progress.

Later Gen. Jimmy Doolittle flew from England with strike photographs. General Bradley was in a much better frame of mind because the attack was proceeding at a much faster pace than the early morning reports showed. In addition, interrogation of the first prisoners-of-war revealed that they were completely demoralized and that the entire front was disorganized as a result of the air attack. When we left General Bradley he was convinced that the air attack had achieved its purpose in blasting open a gap in the German lines.[18]

[18] LATER: Results of the air attack were more effective than was realized. The first reaction was disappointment because of the short bombing. Later interrogation of prisoners and examination of the area after its capture showed that the aerial bombardment was a complete success. The area was saturated with bombs and practically everything above ground was damaged. Steel fragments from bombs shredded light vehicles, perforated heavier equipment, cut tank treads, and splintered large trees. All communications were shattered. In some cases the enemy had to resort to runners to get messages back and forth. One PW reported that the vehicles of an antitank outfit were so badly damaged that they had to be moved by hand. The morale of the men was badly shattered. Several PWs reported that their officers deserted. One German officer, who was outside the main area under attack, said units all around him began pulling out and his men joined in, leaving him with only one NCO and five men out of 50 or 60. Many PWs could not understand why we did not start our ground attack sooner because of the chaotic condition existing behind the German lines. They were in a completely hopeless state for 12 to 18 hours after the air attack.



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Before returning to England I held a press conference with the war correspondents to interpret the air side of Operation COBRA. Most of the war correspondents had seen the short bombing and were greatly concerned. It was a costly mistake, but the laws of war sometimes claim casualties among our own troops. In the last war it was the creeping artillery barrage which sometimes killed our own men.

WIDE WING, 27 *July 1944 (D-plus-51).* I breakfasted with General Spaatz, and we continued discussions about the formation of the Airborne Army. Later a long talk was held with Gen. Bedell Smith, who concurred with some of my rather drastic ideas about formation of the Airborne Army. Already, however, the ground forces are shocked by some of my ideas.

In a talk with General Spaatz and myself, General Eisenhower stated that he was pleased with the air attack at St. Lô and that he considered heavy bombers an indispensable weapon to keep our army moving when they bogged down. General Eisenhower's idea is sound, but the use of heavies in close support is in direct contradiction to what General Spaatz, Doolittle, Eaker, and I feel is the proper employment of heavy bombardment. General Spaatz expressed this by pointing out that if the heavies were diverted too long from their strategic program it would allow targets inside Germany to be rehabilitated. However, when an army bogs down and the fighting becomes static, drastic measures are necessary. It's General Eisenhower's job to get it moving again, and he is justified in calling on any weapon at his disposal.

NORMANDY, 28 *July 1944 (D-plus-52).* The breakthrough has been achieved and the drive is gaining momentum rapidly. Marigny and St. Gilles were captured on 26 July, and the first armored column advanced within five miles of Coutances yesterday. Another armored column captured Canisy and swung west towards Granville. A third column drove towards Villedieu.



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NORMANDY, *29 July 1944 (D-plus-53).* Accompanied by Col. Jim Henry and Col. Ed Nolan, my assistants, I went to the VII Corps for lunch with General Collins. I wanted first-hand comments on our air coöperation. General Collins was enthusiastic about the air support.

"I think we all realize that our losses would have been much heavier if we had attempted to attack without the maximum of air support," he said. "We want air support whenever we can have it, but naturally hope that you can keep it off our necks. We have utmost confidence in the ability of the fighter-bombers to bomb accurately close to the bomb line."

We visited Maj. Gen. Matt Eddy, commander of the 9th Division, who said that his troops had become used to accepting a bomb line of 300 yards and that attacks by fighter-bombers at that distance did not bother them.

I talked to Captain Boyd, who commanded one of the engineer battalions in the 9th Division which was a victim of the short bombing on the 25th. He said that the casualties in his outfit were rather high because the short bombing came so unexpectedly that most of his men were standing up watching the bombing ahead and not in foxholes. Colonel Clarnon, commanding an infantry regiment, said that losses among the headquarters and liaison personnel in his regiment were severe and that another battalion had to pass through and take his regiment's place. Both officers were frank and sincere in their replies. They were not bitter or resentful over the casualties caused by the air force. They seemed to realize that it was a calculated risk.

The forward echelons reported that the advance to the southwest during the day was sensational—in some cases the Command Posts did not know where their advance elements were. Coutances was occupied in the morning and the tank columns were fanning out to the south, southwest, and west. The armored commanders praised the fighter-bomber support for the tank columns highly.

On the trip back along the Marigny-Coutances road we



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passed a truck blown up by a land mine. Only a short time before, we had passed over the same spot in our jeep. It just wasn't our time.

NORMANDY, *30 July 1944 (D-plus-54).* The pace of the advance is increasing. American armor yesterday overran Bréhal and reached Avranches, bypassing Granville.

In today's intelligence meeting, Colonel Swofford gave a talk on German jet-propelled aircraft, several of which have been sighted by the RAF and Eighth Air Force. The Germans have two types in the advance stage of production: the Me-163 and the Me-262. The Me-163 is a rocket-powered aircraft that can fly for perhaps 35 to 40 minutes. Training began in April for 10 squadrons of 21 aircraft each. The Me-262 is a twin-engined aircraft of conventional type, using thermal jet which burns any hydrocarbon fuel. Its probable speed is 500 to 700 m.p.h. A Mosquito which encountered an Me-262 on patrol estimated it to be at least 100 miles per hour faster.

The Germans' progress with jet aircraft places them way ahead of us in this field. If they can man them in sufficient strength they may become a serious threat to our deep heavy-bomber penetrations.

NORMANDY, *31 July 1944 (D-plus-55).* During this period air-ground coördination reached its highest peak. A typical mission was a flight of four Thunderbolts flying in half-hour shifts over a tank column with two-way radio communication between the tank commander and the pilot. Sometimes the tank commander asked the pilot to scout the road ahead for signs of the enemy. Other times the tank commanders would call for help.

Outside of Givray a column of American tanks was held up by a German gun emplacement and unable to move. The road became clogged with vehicles. Lieut. Leslie C. Boce, who was cruising the area in his Thunderbolt, reported he



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heard the following message come through on his radio several times:

"Won't someone come and help? Everybody gets air support but me."

Lieutenant Boce answered: "I'm on my way."

"Is that you above me?" the ground commander asked when he saw a Thunderbolt overhead.

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

"There's a gun emplacement on my right. It's been holding up my column for hours."

Lieutenant Boce and his flight of P-47s dive-bombed the position and then called the tank commander on the radio: "How are we doing?"

"Great!" replied the tank commander. "We are already on the move."

Near Coutances a single Tiger tank was blocking the advance of a column of American tanks. Above, the flight commander in a Thunderbolt called the tank commander: "Tiger tank 75 yards down the road firing on your leading elements."

"We know. Can you help us?" the tank commander replied

"Sure, but the Tiger is too close to you to bomb now. We'll strafe the bastard."

A few minutes later the Thunderbolt called the Sherman: "Hello. Bombed Tiger. We didn't get a direct hit but got three near-misses. He is stopped cock-eyed in the road. Try and proceed and we'll observe your progress."

"All quiet. Well done, pal," answered the tank.

The Shermans found the Tiger immobilized and helpless on its side in a ditch.

The Thunderbolts began to spread fear throughout the German ranks. PWs reported that one of our most-feared weapons was the "Jagdebombers," which the Hun shortened to "Jabes."

One flight leader reported diving on two vehicles near Canisy and seeing a dozen soldiers pile out waving a white



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flag. He radioed the infantry to pick them up as they marched towards our lines.

NORMANDY, *1 August 1944 (D-plus-56).* The 12th Army Group, commanded by General Bradley, became operational today, with General Hodges assuming command of the First Army and Lieut. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., taking over the Third Army, which is now in the battle to exploit the breakthrough. We now have 18 divisions in France: the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 35th, 79th, 83rd, and 90th Infantry Divisions and the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Armored Divisions.

When the Third Army went into action, General Weyland's XIX TAC, which had been supporting the First Army as part of IX TAC, became operational. Its mission is to support Patton's army.

During the last days of July, IX TAC flew a total of 9,840 sorties, averaging over 1,260 a day, and dropped 2,281 tons of bombs. These figures for the last seven days of July may seem astounding, but captured documents, information obtained from PWs, and reconnaissance photographs confirmed the outstanding part that the Ninth Air Force played in the breakthrough:

| | *Destroyed* | *Probable* | *Damaged* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tanks | 384 | 38 | 379 |
| Motor Transport | 2287 | 47 | 527 |
| Railway Cars | 194 | 12 | 155 |
| Locomotives | 14 | 12 | 1 |
| Horse-drawn Vehicles | 125 | 0 | 65 |
| RR & Highway Bridges | 33 | 7 | 37 |
| Road Junctions Damaged | 85 | 0 | 0 |
| Railway Lines Cut | 46 | 0 | 0 |
| Gun Emplacements Attacked | 71 | 0 | 0 |
| Military Occupied Bldgs. | 45 | 6 | 46 |

IX TAC claimed 67 enemy aircraft shot down, 11 probables, and 27 damaged during these seven big days. We lost 10 to



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enemy action in the air and 78 to flak and enemy ground fire, plus 218 planes with battle damage.

Captured records revealed that Colonel Reinhard of the 47th Panzer Corps called the German Chief of Staff and reported: "The activities of the fighter-bombers are reported to be unbearable. *Liebstandarte* also reports that fighter-bomber attacks of such caliber have never before been experienced."

Field Marshal von Kluge told General Warliment, Hitler's personal representative in the West: "The enemy air superiority is terrific and smothers almost every one of our movements. Every movement of the enemy is prepared and protected by its air force. Losses in men and equipment are extraordinary."

ASCOT, *2 August 1944 (D-plus-57).* American armor is overrunning the countryside and spreading panic among the enemy's troops. The British launched an attack southward from Caen two days ago, cutting the road to Avranches. German counterattacks have been repulsed and the entire enemy left flank has been turned. In the past eight days we have advanced 35 miles and taken over 18,000 prisoners.

SHAEF advised that the Airborne Army would be activated at once. Attached to a letter with this information was a note written in General Eisenhower's own hand addressed to his C/S, General Smith:

"In accordance with our conversation this morning, Brereton should be working on his new job instantly. Please inform him that I am particularly anxious about the navigational qualifications of the transport command crews. He is to get on this in an intensive way. He is to keep me in touch with his progress. There is nothing we are undertaking about which I am more concerned than this job of his. I want him on the ball with all his might."

My new Chief of Staff, Brig. Gen. Floyd L. Parks, who is fresh from the United States where he talked with Generals



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Marshall and Arnold about the new organization, reported for duty along with Brig. Gen. Stuart L. Cutler.

UXBRIDGE, *3 August 1944 (D-plus-58).* After Commanders' Meeting at Hillingdon House, conferred with Generals Parks, Cutler, and Stearley about the organization of the Airborne Army. I directed that Stearley be assigned as head of G-3 operations and Cutler assigned as Deputy C/S, Plans.

General Patton's tank columns, led by the 6th Armored Division, poured through the gap opened at Avranches and raced southward to cut off the Brittany peninsula. Yesterday Patton's tanks covered 40 miles down the main road to Rennes. The German Seventh Army, trying to keep the Americans bottled up in the Cotentin Peninsula, did not withdraw after Patton's tanks broke through but tried to cut the corridor by counterattacks.

ASCOT, *4 August 1944 (D-plus-59).* I recommended to SHAEF that the new organization's name be "First Allied Airborne Army," as it'll be composed of Americans, British, Polish, and French. I agreed that Lieutenant General Browning, chief of the British Airborne Corps, will be my deputy commander.

I first met General Browning in North Africa and I had worked with him throughout the year in England. He is a distinguished officer of the British Guardsman type.

Arrangements were made with the Ninth Air Force for the First Allied Airborne Army to share headquarters at Ascot until they move to France shortly.

ASCOT, *5 August 1944 (D-plus-60).* General Montgomery informed General Browning that he wished us to review Operation LUCKY STRIKE B, a wide sweeping movement around the southern flank of the German forces in Normandy. General Parks was sent to SHAEF Forward to ascertain the exact status of the British airborne forces and clarify



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the airborne phase of the mission, code name Operation TRANSFIGURE.

ASCOT, *6 August 1944 (D-plus-61).* The Third Army's advances eastward and southward were breaking all records for swift, bold action. The enemy in the Brittany peninsula was withdrawing to Brest, Lorient, and St. Malo for last-ditch stands behind prepared defenses. Rennes fell without a struggle and General Patton's tanks began fanning out to the east. Patton, with characteristic boldness, asked General Weyland if an air force had ever protected an army flank. General Weyland replied that he had never heard of it.

"Well," Patton replied, "it's going to happen now."

General Patton then forgot about the 20,000 German troops below the Loire and proceeded with his drive to Paris. General Weyland's XIX TAC's fighter-bombers were charged with preventing concentrations of troops, keeping the Germans under close surveillance and preventing the enemy from coming north of the Loire.[14]

After discussions with General Ridgway, commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps, and General Browning, it was decided to submit to SHAEF a revised plan for Operation TRANSFIGURE. This is an airborne operation, designed to close the Paris-Orléans Gap and cut off the enemy's retreat. The force contemplated is a corps commanded by General Browning with the British 1st Airborne Division, the U.S. 101st Airborne Division, the 1st Polish Brigade, 874th Battalion Aviation Engineers, and the 52nd Scotch (Lowlands) Division (air transported).

ASCOT, *7 August 1944 (D-plus-62).* Maj. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, who had been serving as deputy commander

[14] LATER: The protection of Patton's right flank by air forces was one of the high spots of air-ground coöperation and added a new touch to modern warfare. No threat ever developed to Patton's flank. When the Germans did decide to move it was to the east in an effort to get back to Germany.



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of AEAF, succeeded me as commander of the Ninth Air Force. He was my personal choice. One of our most progressive air officers, General Vandenberg will, I believe, carry on the Ninth's record of achievement. General Orders No. 199 expressed my feelings on leaving the Ninth Air Force.

HEADQUARTERS
NINTH AIR FORCE

APO 696, U S Army
7 August 1944.

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER . . . 199

In relinquishing command of the Ninth Air Force, which it has been my privilege and duty to have held some two years from its initial entry into combat, I cannot be blamed if my initial reaction is one of sincere personal regret. The unstinting loyalty and complete coöperation of every officer, man, and woman of this command through the trials and tribulations of organization and training and the fortitude and inimitable determination with which the operations have been effected in my opinion constitutes a conspicuous contribution to the ultimate defeat of the enemy. Your devotion to the task at hand and the masterly execution thereof warrants the conviction that both were controlling factors in the initial successes attained in the invasion and will be so in subsequent achievements to come.

Thru Libya and Tunisia and now in Normandy, the individual and collective deeds of heroism and the arduous tasks of administration, planning, and preparation all done faithfully are in keeping with the highest traditions of our Army and its Air Force.

I am proud of you, and each of you can be justly proud. It has been a most esteemed official and individual right to have been your commander.

Good luck to you all.

L. H. Brereton,
Lt. General, USA,
Commanding



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When I left the Ninth Air Force it was the world's largest from the standpoint of aircraft (more than 4100) and personnel (more than 182,000). A breakdown on the personnel follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Officers | 22,772 |
| Enlisted Men | 158,867 |
| Warrant Officers | 425 |
| Nurses | 291 |
| Total | 182,355 |



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PART VI

# ENGLAND

## Airborne Phase

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## ENGLAND: First Allied Airborne Army

NORMANDY, *7 August 1944 (continued).* Flew here to consult with General Bradley about proposed airborne operations. On arrival learned that he would not return for an hour and a half. My pilot, Lieutenant Jenson, suggested we might run down south and look at the front lines in a liaison plane. We followed the road south of Avranches and then turned west along the coast, seeing no sign of action until we reached St. Malo itself. Here there appeared to be a very lively engagement going on south of town. There was no need to worry about air cover. Our fighter-bombers were everywhere.

On my return arrived at General Bradley's Hqs. at the same time as the Prime Minister. We sat around in the shade outside General Bradley's caravan listening to Churchill. When the Prime Minister was asked if he wanted tea, he said he would take whisky. He had his cigar with him, as usual, and he was bubbling over with good spirits. He did most of the talking. Everyone was careful when he came around not to talk shop because he had a way of wanting to run things his way and there was no need to call any particular plan to his attention. However, he was remarkably well informed about details as well as the broad overall plan. His stamina and dogged determination are remarkable. Hitler could never have found a more determined, unyielding adversary. A story is told about Churchill's speech delivered on 4 June 1940, when England was at its lowest ebb and Hitler threatened invasion. At the close of the speech, in which he said: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields and



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in the streets," Churchill, physically and mentally exhausted, asked for a drink of brandy. He drank it down and said: "And yes, by God, we'll fight them with broken glasses and broken bottles, because that's all we have."

After he left, discussed with General Bradley the airborne operation planned for the Paris-Orléans Gap. It was agreed that the operation would be prepared so that it could be mounted immediately.

Everyone optimistic about the way the battle is going. A German counterattack of four Panzer divisions against the corridor at Avranches yesterday was repulsed with heavy losses. The attack was carried out viciously and forced us to evacuate Domfront and Mortain, but they were unable to penetrate through to the sea and cut off General Patton's armored forces. The 3rd Armored Division, combined with support from the Ninth Air Force and the RAF, wrecked approximately 135 German tanks. The RAF's rocket-firing Typhoons, called in to help beat back the attack, were particularly effective.

ASCOT, *8 August 1944 (D-plus-63).* Airborne troops are the most modern expression of warfare, but 160 years ago Benjamin Franklin envisaged the possibility of an army such as General Eisenhower has now formed. In 1784 Franklin said:

> Where is the Prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defense, as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds, might not, in many places, do an infinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them?

ASCOT, *9 August 1944 (D-plus-64).* Col. R. H. Parham, PRO of the Ninth Air Force, informed me that newspapermen were circulating a rumor that my relinquishment of command of the Ninth Air Force was for cause, due to the short bombing at St. Lô. I directed my C/S to call General Bedell Smith about this malicious gossip and request that my



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new command be announced. General Smith said that the formation of the airborne army was "top secret" and could not be announced now but that every means would be taken to protect my reputation.

MEMBURY, *10 August 1944 (D-plus-65).* Came here by train with General Eisenhower and party to inspect the 101st Airborne Division. After General Eisenhower had decorated 15 men for bravery in action in Normandy, he made a two-hour inspection of the division. He talked to many of the men and was surprised at the cross-section of America represented. Those questioned were from 15 different states, well divided among north, south, east, and west. Their trades in civilian life were printer, truckman, dairy farmer, railroad engineer, railway postal clerk, postman, insurance agent, barkeeper, Mississippi boat deckhand, Great Lakes steamboat worker, ladies' hairdresser, ladies' dressmaker, ladies' millinery assistant, tailor, bootblack-stand operator, taxi-driver, commercial artist, postgraduate medical student, several mine workers, and a number of farmers.

One of the men decorated by General Eisenhower was a little chap not more than five feet two inches tall, weighing about 120 pounds. He had been a prisoner-of-war for five days and escaped. When General Eisenhower asked him how he escaped, he replied: "My guard got careless."

"Did you kill the guard?" asked General Eisenhower.

The little trooper, blushing and looking very uncomfortable, said: "Well, General, he is dead now."

General Eisenhower gave an inspiring talk to the 101st and the combat crews of the Troop Carrier Command, assembled with them. He said:

Any man in the world would feel honored to meet you. I want to express my gratitude for what you have done in the past. But for your services the great operation proceeding in France perhaps could not have taken place without your spearheading. The accomplishments of the past are only a part of what the future holds. I want to announce the First Allied Airborne Army,



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under an American Air Force General, Lieutenant General Brereton, of the Ninth Air Force. I brought him along with me today to see you men. It is through this command that we hope all the airborne troops and the Air Transport command will become brothers, conscious of each other's success as they are of their own. We want it so that when pilots return, the first thing they will do is report to their Commanding Officer that their troops had been dropped where they were supposed to be.

In the airborne operations lies one of the great futures of our success. My pride in what you have done in the past is not nearly equal to my confidence in what you are going to do in the future, for we have an opportunity to end this war far, far quicker than we could do without you. The United States of the future is going to be deeply indebted to you. All the democracies will remember all your future and past exploits. I am proud of you and what the Transport Command has done. I was talking to a soldier and noticed he did not wear his campaign ribbons. As old soldiers, I do not care whether you wear your ribbons from former wars, but as a personal favor to me, I ask you please to wear your ribbons of these campaigns. They will be something worth while remembering.

ASCOT, *12 August 1944 (D-plus-67).* The pincers movement to encircle the Germans in the Mortain-Falaise-Argentan trap is under way. Our forces have a ring of armor around Le Mans. General Bradley has turned north towards Argentan with two armored and two infantry divisions.

General Montgomery reported the Germans are still fighting hard and trying to bring up reinforcements. One division was told to take a position west of Paris and wait for its tail to catch up with it. Our air superiority has prevented the enemy from bringing up his forces in any order.

From General Arnold this note: "Hope that your new command will bear fruit in a big way soon before the Germans have time to reorganize and consolidate."

ASCOT, *13 August 1944 (D-plus-68).* General Parks returned from conference with General Bradley in France and reported:



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General Bradley heartily agrees with our decision not to permit the use of airborne troops in small harassing operations such as requested by General Montgomery. He felt that there is a possibility of using a "Long Hook," but not for at least two weeks. This would be in the event that the enemy is able to hold up the jaws of the pincers and withdraw to the east. To my suggestion that we be considered in helping to close the noose in the "Short Hook," he stated that unless we were prepared to drop on less notice than five days it would be too late. The Germans have pontoon bridges across the Seine west of Paris which they use at night and swing to the banks and camouflage during the day. We should plan an operation to block the Germans from using the pontoon bridges in the event they are pushed directly against the Seine. If the Germans are able to hold the jaws of the pincers long enough to permit an airborne operation, Bradley felt that we might be used to complete the pincers and cut off withdrawal by dropping across the roads leading to the northeast from Falaise and Argentan.

All units of the Airborne task force were moved to the airfields and prepared to take off on minimum notice.

ASCOT, *14 August 1944 (D-plus-69).* Notified SHAEF that the airborne task force would be ready to put Operation TRANSFIGURE into effect on 48 hours' notice after tomorrow (15 August).

Received a copy of a cable from General Arnold to General Eisenhower:

"In view of the situation in France today, what is your plan in a very broad outline for the employment of the Brereton command? Troop Carrier planes are not comparing at all favorably with combat plane missions (other than supply and training) accomplished and hours in the air."

ASCOT, *15 August 1944 (D-plus-70).* Operation ANVIL, the invasion of Southern France by the U.S. Seventh Army under Lieut. Gen. Alexander Patch, began in the early morning



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hours and met little resistance. SHAEF has decided to tentatively withhold TRANSFIGURE and utilize all air cargo lift to place 2,000 tons of supplies in Le Mans.

ASCOT, *17 August 1944 (D-plus-72).* Operation TRANSFIGURE cancelled.

The Third Army's farthest-advanced armored spearhead was reported only nine miles from Paris. General Patton's swift advance had made the airborne operation unnecessary.

ASCOT, *19 August 1944 (D-puls-74).* Plans for Operation BOXER have been completed. The Airborne army will land behind Boulogne. The force will be in a position to:

(1) Capture Boulogne;

(2) operate in south or southeasterly direction against the right flank and rear of the enemy;

(3) attack the area from which flying bombs are launched; and

(4) draw off the enemy forces from the main front by creating a diversion in the Boulogne area.

The Falaise Gap was virtually closed yesterday. Thunderbolts on an early morning recco discovered 1,000 to 1,500 vehicles, bumper to bumper, headed north in the Argentan-Trun area and another 1,000 plus in the Falaise area camouflaged by smoke. Pilots were told not to attack because the enemy vehicles were in the British area of responsibility. RAF's 2nd TAF, attacking with rockets, bombs, cannon, and machine guns, had one of the biggest days on record, claiming 1,159 M/T destroyed, 1,724 damaged, and 124 tanks destroyed and 96 damaged. One of General Montgomery's staff officers announced that the power of the German Seventh Army had been smashed in a day of concentrated air attacks.

General Patton's tank columns reached the Seine at Mantes-Gassicourt and Vernon, preparing a much bigger pocket than at Falaise.



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ASCOT, *20 August 1944 (D-plus-75).* The Air Ministry reported that the German radio had announced an allied airborne operation under way along the Seine. This is probably a German feeler for information, but there is also a chance that someone may have been doing a little loose talking about our plans. G-2 was told to investigate.

Security silence is being maintained by SHAEF regarding all progress in the Paris area. Our forces are moving so fast that in some cases we do not know where they are. General Patton's forward forces are running short of ammunition, oil, and food. We are set to transport 500 tons as soon as the weather breaks.

The Falaise Gap was closed yesterday. We hope to trap those who get out of the gap before they can get across the Seine. XIX TAC pilots reported fires and explosions in the Paris area, indicating that the Germans have started demolitions preparatory to pulling out of Paris. The Germans are trying to get across the bridgeless Seine at night by pontoons and ferry, and even by swimming.

ASCOT, *21 August 1944 (D-plus-76).* The Troop Carrier forces which participated in Operation ANVIL, the landing in southern France, are enroute back to the U.K. They include 403 C-47s, with 429 pilots, 429 co-pilots, and 572 glider pilots.

Brig. R. F. K. Goldsmith of the British Army reported for duty as Deputy Chief of Staff, FAAA.

ASCOT, *22 August 1944 (D-plus-77).* FFI forces (patriots) and *Maquis* are fighting the Germans in the streets of Paris. The 79th Division has a solid bridgehead across the Seine northwest of Paris. General Patton's tank columns are in Versailles. The British and Canadians are driving for the Seine while continuing mopping-up operations in the Normandy pocket.



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HQS. 21ST ARMY GROUP, FRANCE, *25 August 1944 (D-plus-80).* Here to discuss airborne operations with 21st Army Group. General de Guingand wished us to drop in the Doullens area, about 25 miles north of Amiens. I refused this mission because it is of a tactical nature and the linkup with ground forces would occur within 48 hours. I suggested that in view of the speed of the advance of the ground forces we discard all planning except a landing in the Aachen-Maastricht Gap, which would not have to be closely coördinated with the advancing armies. The armies are moving so swiftly we can't keep up with them unless we are released from all air resupply operation.

ASCOT, *26 August 1944 (D-plus-81).* Operation BOXER is cancelled.

I told my staff that General Eisenhower wants the airborne army used in mass. He believes that if it is used that way the effect on the morale of the Germans would be devastating.

ASCOT, *28 August 1944 (D-plus-83).* The 17th Airborne Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. William M. Miley, is now arriving in the U.K. and will be complete within a week.

ASCOT, *31 August 1944 (D-plus-86).* General Montgomery's 21st Army Group has ordered cancellation of Operation LINNET, a drop in the Lille area. Their supply lines are badly overextended and they require air resupply. I directed that our target be changed to the Aachen-Maastricht Gap. The troops will remain in the marshaling area.

During the last days of August the Luftwaffe was mauled severely. On 25 August the IX and XIX TAC, in aerial combat and strafing attacks on enemy airfields, destroyed a total of 127 planes, 77 in the air and 50 on the ground, and another 44 probably destroyed and damaged. In Germany long-range escort fighters destroyed 51 aircraft, 11 in the air and 40 on the ground—making 254 Nazi fighters put out of action in one day.



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During the last few days the First and Third Armies continued their advances and reached Verdun, 60 miles from the German border. Château-Thierry and other famous battlefields of World War I were captured within a few hours on 29 August by General Patton's tanks. In the British-Canadian sector advances were made to within 17 miles of Dieppe. Reims, Sedan, and Amiens fell as the enemy retreated to the Siegfried Line.

ASCOT, *1 September 1944 (D-plus-87).* Fifth anniversary of the opening of World War II finds the U.S. First Army at the Belgian border north of Amiens and the U.S. Third Army advancing on Germany.

ADVANCE HQ. SHAEF, *3 September 1944 (D-plus-89).* General Eisenhower and ACM Tedder favored mounting Operation LINNET II, a drop in the Aachen-Maastricht Gap. However, the Supreme Commander left the decision to Bradley and Montgomery. General Browning came for a conference with me at Ascot, and I told him that the operation would be mounted tomorrow or not at all. Browning, who is to command the corps in the operation, brought up the point that the maps of the area could not be distributed to the lower echelons in time to brief them properly. I told him that the disorganization of the enemy demanded that chances be taken—that the operation would not be cancelled except because of weather or direction from higher Hqs. Browning remained after the conference and told me that in his opinion the operation could not be attempted on such short notice and that he proposed to submit in writing his protest and those of his division commanders.

After General Browning left I called General Ridgway and asked him if he thought Browning meant either of the American commanders in his statement "my division commanders." Matt Ridgway said he felt sure that the commanders of the 82nd and 101st Divisions would not protest the execution of any decisions handed down to them—that



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they would express an opinion in the formative stages before the decision was made, but that once the decision was made their determination to carry it out could not be questioned. He said they would do as ordered and make a 100 percent job of it.

I directed Ridgway to be prepared to assume command of the operation and told him that I'd give him my decision as soon as I had informed Browning of my intention to replace him.

Later in the evening I received a letter from General Browning concerning our differences of opinion over the feasibility of mounting Operation LINNET on 36 hours' notice.

General Browning's letter concluded by saying that in view of our sharp difference of opinion he felt that he could not continue as Deputy Commander of the First Allied Airborne Army and therefore tendered his resignation.

ASCOT, *4 September 1944 (D-plus-90).* A staff conference was held to push the completion of detailed plans for the Arnhem operation—Operation MARKET. Afterwards I went to Hqs. British Airborne Corps at Moor Park for a frank talk with General Browning about our exchange of letters. I told him that, inasmuch as he had been appointed deputy by the Supreme Commander, his resignation must be acted upon by General Eisenhower. I intended to forward his letter with my explanation of the circumstances and invited General Browning to add his comments. Browning, who had cooled off considerably after writing his letter, was quite willing to have the resignation withdrawn. He realized that under the circumstances General Ridgway would command the airborne forces in Operation LINNET II. After a frank talk I felt that we understood each other.

ASCOT, *5 September 1944 (D-plus-91).* Operation LINNET II cancelled. Planning proceeded on Operation MARKET.



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ASCOT, *7 September 1944 (D-plus-93).* ACM Tedder visited me to discuss airborne problems. The biggest obstacle to date in the employment of airborne forces in their proper role has been the refusal on the part of higher authority to employ the Troop Carrier Command in its primary mission of carrying troops for combat. The Troop Carriers will be used either to supply the ground forces or for their proper mission of delivering airborne troops. They cannot do both. There has been practically solid opposition on the part of the ground commanders to releasing aircraft, intended primarily for tactical missions, from their secondary jobs of carrying supplies. Inability to take advantage of the chance of delivering a paralyzing blow by airborne action was due to the lack of Troop Carrier aircraft which could have been made immediately available for airborne operations had they not been used for resupply and evacuation. This decision must be a High Command function. It cannot be delegated to lower commands whose conception of their successful operations depends invariably on the supply situation.

I feel that, inasmuch as the airborne army is a strategic general headquarters reserve, the planning should be held on the Supreme Commander's level. When the planning is below Army Group level, it represents time wasted, because in practically every case the operation is not feasible or has to be replanned. The conception of the employment of the Airborne Army as a strategic army is not understood.

ASCOT, *8 September, 1944 (D-plus-94).* The first V-2 bombs fell on London. They are far more dangerous than the V-1s. Unlike the V-1s, which give a warning when their motors cut out before diving, the V-2s give no warning.

ASCOT, *11 September 1944 (D-plus-97).* Everywhere the Germans are retreating, trying to reach the protection of the Siegfried Line and their prepared defenses. Our big problem is supply. Our armies are consuming enormous quantities of ammunition, fuel, and food.



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The First Army captured Liége three days ago and is at the Luxembourg-German border. The Third Army has reached the Moselle and made a junction with the Seventh Army coming up from the south. The British and Canadians in the north liberated Brussels and Antwerp a week ago and were close to the Dutch border.

The stage is set to deal the enemy a knockout. Our airborne forces are available for a bold stroke in the enemy's rear. Ten operations are planned:

Operation COMET, desired by the Northern group of armies on the Rhine bridges from Arnhem to Wesel to facilitate an advance on the Ruhr from the north.

Operation INFATUATE, a landing on Walcheren Island to aid in opening the port of Antwerp by cutting off or harassing the German retreat across the Scheldt Estuary.

Operation NAPLES I, an operation behind the Siegfried Line to the east of Aachen.

Operation NAPLES II, a bridgehead over the Rhine in the vicinity of Cologne.

MILAN I, breaching the Siegfried Line at Trier.

MILAN II, to assist in crossing the Rhine between Neuwied and Coblenz.

CHOKER I, to assist in breaching the Siegfried Line at Saarbrücken.

CHOKER II, to assist in crossing the Rhine between Mainz and Mannheim.

Operation MARKET, to seize the vital bridges across the Maas, Waal, and Lower Rhine and establish a corridor through Holland and into Germany for the British Second Army.

Operation TALISMAN, in the event of German surrender to seize airfields in the Berlin area to facilitate the establishment of a SHAEF force there and the seizure of the German naval base at Kiel.

I refused Operation INFATUATE because of intense flak on Walcheren, difficult terrain which would prevent glider



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landings, excessive losses likely because of drowning, non-availability of U.S. troops, and the fact that the operation is an improper employment of airborne forces.

All consideration favored Operation MARKET as likely to produce the greatest results. The enemy's forces were badly depleted and broken up in the Falaise Gap, in the retreat across the Seine, and in eastern France and Belgium. Operation MARKET, if successful, would outflank the Siegfried Line, trap thousands of Germans to the west, and put us across the Rhine and in a position to encircle the Ruhr and catch the bulk of the enemy's forces west of the Rhine.

General Eisenhower made the airborne army available to 21st Army Group until the Rhine should be crossed, thus giving Operation MARKET first priority. There were several undesirable features of MARKET. General Browning, who had been charged with planning for MARKET with the 21st Army Group, informed me that at General Montgomery's insistence he had virtually agreed to drop the 101st Airborne Division in seven separate areas along an axis 30 miles in length to seize key crossings. I objected to this because such dispersion destroys the tactical integrity of a division, presents an insurmountable supply problem, and renders the smaller groups susceptible to being destroyed in detail without accomplishing the mission. I decided that General Taylor, commanding the 101st Airborne Division, would see General Montgomery about a more concentrated landing. If, after the disadvantages of the first maneuver have been explained to General Montgomery, he still insists, we will go in as planned.

PARIS, *12 September 1944 (D-plus-98).* Flew to Paris to inspect location for Advanced Hqs. It is my first visit to Paris since 1919–23 when I was Air Attaché to the American Embassy. The buildings look the same and the people, despite their somewhat shabby appearance, are putting up a brave front, but four years under the Germans has weighed



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heavily on them. In the old days Paris seemed a seventh heaven to a young aviator who thought the whole world was his oyster. At the Ritz Hotel I had a note from Archbishop Spellman, who had quarters right across from me. I called on him and we spent some time reminiscing over experiences in Africa and mutual acquaintances.

ASCOT, *13 September 1944 (D-plus-99).* General Parks, who went with General Taylor to the 21st Army Group, reported that Lieut. Gen. Sir Miles C. Dempsey, commanding the British Second Army, was in accord with our recommendations for changes in Operation MARKET. General Dempsey seems to have a better appreciation of the employment of airborne forces than other British ground commanders. He is not only a competent soldier but he has a delightful personality—quiet, unassuming and exceedingly modest.

ASCOT, *16 September 1944 (D-plus-102).* Lunched with General Browning at Moor Park and wished him good luck on the morrow—D-day for Operation MARKET. He was in good spirits.

Stonewall Jackson said: "Mystify, mislead, and surprise." That's what we tried to do in our advance buildup for Operation MARKET. In order to make the enemy believe that our supply situation would make it impossible for the Northern Group of Armies to advance, patrols of the 30th Corps were withdrawn as much as ten miles in some instances. At the same time the U.S. First and Third Armies made attacks into Germany and across the Moselle. Meanwhile, troops and supplies were marshaled in the large bridgehead which the British Second Army held on the north bank of the Albert Canal.

The forces for Operation MARKET were:

Hq. British Airborne Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Browning.



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1st British Airborne Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. R. E. Urquhart, C.B., D.S.O.

82nd Airborne Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. James M. Gavin.

101st Airborne Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor.

1st Polish Paratroop Brigade, commanded by Maj. Gen. S. Sosabowski.

The mission was to capture and hold the crossings over the canals and rivers that lay on the British Second Army's axis of advance from inclusive Eindhoven to inclusive Arnhem. The British and Poles were to capture the bridges at Arnhem and establish a bridgehead around them so that the Second Army, led by the Guards Armored Division, could pass through without delay on their advance northwards. The 82nd was to capture the crossings at Nijmegen and Grave and to hold the high ground between Nijmegen and Groesbeek. The 101st was to seize the bridges and defiles between Eindhoven and Grave.

Operation GARDEN was the code name for the British Second Army's advance from the general line of the Albert and Escaut canals in Belgium to the Zuider Zee in Holland, a distance of about 99 miles. The advance was to be made on a very narrow front, with only one road most of the way. The British Second Army, which had advanced about 280 miles between late August and 11 September, did not have a surplus of transport and supplies.

We were all glad to be getting into action. In the 40 days since the formation of the First Allied Airborne Army we have planned 18 different operations, some of which were scrubbed because our armies moved too fast and others because Troop Carriers were engaged in air supply.

D-DAY, OPERATION MARKET, *17 September 1944 (D-plus-103)*. Left at 0630 for Aldermaston airfield to witness the departure of the first glider elements of the 101st Air-



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borne Division. Because of the early morning fog there was a delay.[1]

When the fog cleared, I witnessed the glider takeoff of the 501st Combat Team, commanded by Col. Howard R. Johnson, Washington, D.C.[2]

Immediately after their departure I took off in a B-17 with Bill Courtney, *Collier's* war correspondent, Colonel Henry, and a PRO photographer to witness the landing. We followed the southern course below the Thames estuary to Folkestone, then to a point north of Ostend, thence east over Ghent and past Antwerp to the I.P. at Gheel. Here we ran into flak. Remaining in this vicinity for approximately 20 minutes, we encountered light flak. Then we proceeded to the DZ at Eindhoven and watched our dive bombers take out the flak positions. Our B-17 was hit in several places by light flak. Returned to Northolt airfield and then proceeded to Eastcote, Hqs. of the Troop Carrier Command, where I followed the operation along with ACM Tedder, General Ridgway, General Williams, General Stearley, and AVM Hollinghurst of RAF's 38 Group.

I telephoned General Parks the following information for a telegraphic report to SHAEF:

Communication established between the First Allied Airborne Army and the MARKET task force headquarters at 1700 hours. RAF 38 and 46 Groups returned without casualties. TAC recce by RAF at 1415 indicated that landing of troops on DZs and LZs was accurate. Flew over DZs and troops were dispersed and gone

[1] General Parks, who was at Membury with ACM Tedder, General Browning, and General Taylor, said that Tedder was very impressed by the split-second timing with which the planes and gliders took off. General Browning's glider was a curiosity to General Parks. "I took a look in General Browning's glider," he said, "and I have never seen so much junk. It looked like a gypsy caravan. There were bicycles, bazookas, bedding rolls, radios, and all sorts of stuff he planned to use for his Command Post."

[2] LATER: Colonel Johnson, a very brave soldier, was later killed by artillery fire, 8 October, in Holland.



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and LZ unloading was proceeding without opposition. The bridge at Grave was apparently secured by the 82nd and the bridges at Nijmegen and Arnhem were intact. The operation proved conclusively that fighters could reduce flak in an operation of this nature to a negligible consideration.

MARKET was the greatest airborne operation ever attempted. The Troop Carrier fleet which took off numbered 1544 planes and 478 gliders. In all, 26 air bases, nine British and 17 American, were used. It took an hour and a half for all the aircraft to be airborne. The streams of aircraft converged to assembly points in England and then split into two trains to cross the North Sea, one flying a northern route and the other a southern route. Weather for the operation was favorable. Overland fog prevailed at English airports but cleared shortly after 0900, and the takeoff started at 1025.

The two air columns reached their objectives on schedule. Several gliders were prematurely released over the North Sea because of mechanical failures, but most of the personnel were saved by air-sea rescue. A small number of gliders of the 82nd Airborne Division did not receive the green light over their LZ and were carried 5 miles into Germany before they were cut loose.[3]

Air support was superb. The first blow at the enemy's defenses was struck the night of 16–17 September by 200 Lancasters and 23 Mosquitoes which attacked four airfields in the area. On D-day 54 Lancasters and 5 Mosquitoes started working over the known flak positions. Then 85 Lancasters and 15 Mosquitoes attacked three coastal batteries on Walcheren. Then came 816 Fortresses, escorted by 161 Mustangs, and 212 P-47s from the Ninth attacking 117 flak positions just before the Troop Carriers arrived. The airborne armada was protected by 371 Tempests, Spitfires, and Mosquitoes and

[3] LATER: About half of the personnel found their way back to the Division with the aid of a Ukrainian deserter from the German Army.



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548 Thunderbolts, Mustangs, and Lightnings. Not only were land batteries knocked out but several flak ships and barges off the Dutch islands were destroyed. The results of this support were reflected immediately in our small losses. Only 30 Luftwaffe fighters were seen, and 7 of them were shot down.

Surprise was achieved and by midnight many of the initial objectives were taken. The 101st Division seized four bridges intact in the Veghel area and another over the Dommel River. The 82nd captured the bridge at Grave and the bridge over the Maas-Waal canal but were stopped 400 yards short of the bridge at Nijmegen. The British 1st Airborne Division ("Red Devils") and Poles found the railroad bridge at Arnhem blown when they reached it. The main highway bridge was intact and they installed themselves in houses at the north end from where they were able to dominate the northern approach. Meanwhile, the Guards Armored Division, which was to spearhead the drive to link up with the Arnhem force, jumped off at 1400 but met unexpectedly stiff opposition and by nightfall had advanced only to Valkenswaard, 6 miles below Eindhoven.

Three American war correspondents, Bill Boni (AP), Walter Cronkite (UP), and Stanley Woodward *(New York Herald Tribune)*, flew in with the 82nd and 101st in gliders. I knew how dangerous this mission would be and I directed Colonel Nolan to brief the journalists accordingly. Colonel Nolan told me that when he explained the risks to Woodward, who wears thick glasses and can hardly see without them, spoke up and said: "I've had a lot of experience in planes."

"How much is that?" Nolan asked.

"Oh, I flew from New York to Chicago one time," Woodward replied.

Fortunately all the correspondents landed safely.

Ed Murrow, Columbia Broadcasting System, flew in a Troop Carrier plane and his broadcast gave an excellent on-the-spot account of the drop. It follows:



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You'll have heard that the Allies today made a great airborne landing in Holland. It was the greatest operation of its kind in the history of warfare. Early this morning, the paratroopers, laden down with equipment, walked out across a green field and climbed into the C-47s. After we took off we seemed to gather more ships as we passed over a series of airfields and the pilot said: "We're gathering in all the little chickens before we cross the big water." The Paratroops sat relaxed; two of them were asleep. The door of the rear of the plane had been removed; all the belts and hinges had been covered with tape to prevent the parachute harness from fouling. The big fellow near the door looked down and said: "Look at them land girls down there, picking potatoes!" The men were completely relaxed. Occasionally, one would rub the palm of his hand on his trouser leg. One sat staring into his tin helmet. . . .

Now we are over Holland and I'm going to move forward, up to the pilot's compartment, and I've got my parachute harness hung on the door. We're flying over country that has been inundated. . . .

The skipper is sitting there very calmly, flying with one hand. There is no traffic on this one railway, which stands well above the water. It seems to have been built along the top of a dyke. This countryside below looks like the area around the Mississippi during the flood time except that all the houses seem to be covered with red tile. . . . The spire of a magnificent old Dutch church rises clear above the little houses that surround it. One barge in a canal, but completely deserted. . . . The country is desolate. . . . It isn't possible that people are living down there, because in most cases the water is right up to the eaves. . . .

I'm standing here, looking down the length of the ship now. The crew chief is on his knees back in the very rear, talking into his inter-com. . . . They're looking out the window rather curiously, almost as if they were passengers on a peacetime airline. You occasionally see a man rub the palm of his hand across his trouser leg. There seems to be . . . a sort of film over some of the faces, as though they were just on the verge of perspiring, but they aren't. . . .

The pilot of this plane, has just said: "Jerry must not live here any more. He isn't shooting at us." We've been flying straight



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into Holland for something like twenty minutes, so far without any opposition. Our fighters are down, just almost nosing along the hedgerows, searching the little villages, and are up above us and on both sides. This is the real meaning of airpower. . . .

I look back at the door and the pilot gives me the clenched-hand salute, like a boxer about to jump. . . . The ships ahead of us are still going on. There's a burst of flak. You can see it right from the side. It's coming from the port side just across our nose, but a little bit low. Tracers going across us, in front of our nose. I think it's coming from that little village just beside the canal. More tracer coming up now, cutting across in front of our nose. A lovely orange color it is. . . . In just about 40 seconds now our ship will drop the men; they will walk out onto Dutch soil. You can probably hear the snap as they check the lashing on the static line. There they go! Do you hear them count? Three . . . four . . . five . . . six . . . seven . . . eight . . . nine . . . ten . . . eleven . . . twelve . . . thirteen . . . fourteen . . . fifteen . . . sixteen. . . . Now every man is out . . .! I can see their chutes going down now. Every man clear . . . they're dropping beside the little windmill near a church, hanging there, very gracefully, and seem to be completely relaxed, like nothing so much as khaki dolls hanging beneath green lampshades. I see the men go down just north of a little road. The whole sky is filled with parachutes. They're all going down so slowly. It seems as though they should get to the ground much faster. We're now swinging about, making a right-hand turn. . . .

ASCOT, *18 September 1944 (D-plus-104).* General Ridgway and I flew to Brussels but were unable to land because of the weather and returned to Northholt airfield and then went to Troop Carrier Hqs. at Eastcote.

With rain and thick clouds spreading over Belgium, a quick decision had to be made about the second day's lift. I decided to send all transports and gliders in via the northern route. Late in the day 252 B-24s dropped supplies.

The reaction of the enemy made it clear that he was going to fight bitterly to defend the corridor into Germany. The 101st captured Eindhoven at 1300. The 82nd, aided by mem-



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bers of the Dutch Resistance, engaged in severe fighting in the drive for Nijmegen bridge. During the battle the 82nd captured a railway train trying to escape into Germany.

At Arnhem the British "Red Devils" were split into three forces: one at the northern end of the bridge, one in the western outskirts of Arnhem, and one in the area between the Drop Zones and Landing Zones and Oosterbeek. Air reinforcements, which would have helped the British get the jump on the enemy before he could build up his forces, did not arrive until the afternoon because of fog at English bases.

The Guards Armored met heavy resistance at Aalst and were unable to advance. Firm contact was made with the 101st just south of Eindhoven at 1900 hours. Quickly passing through Eindhoven, the British armor reached the south side of the Wilhelmina Canal by 2100 hours. Their engineers immediately began the construction of a bridge over the canal at Zon. The enemy had blown this bridge yesterday when the 101st was within 100 yards of it.

HOLLAND, *19 September 1944 (D-plus-105).* XVIII Corps (Airborne) was directed to be ready to mount an airborne operation with the units retrieved from the battlefield at the earliest possible moment after 1 October. I then flew to Antwerp. A truck was borrowed and we drove to Brussels, where General de Guingand lent us a car to drive to the front. About 15 miles from Eindhoven we were halted and told that no convoys could proceed farther north because the Germans were counterattacking. However, I decided to continue on to the CP of the 502nd Parachute Infantry, 101st Division.

As we arrived at Eindhoven at dusk, flares appeared directly overhead, and in our effort to drive to the outskirts our path was blocked by bombs and we turned up a road which was a dead end. There we ditched the vehicles and ducked into a city park, remaining flat on our stomachs for almost an hour while approximately 120 Stukas and Ju-88s bombed Eindhoven. Considerable damage was done to the city and ammunition and supply trains. A second wave of pathfinders



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came over dropping flares. However, we decided to make a run for the open country. A bomb landed about 15 feet from us, between us and another jeep, causing it to run into a hole. That would certainly have been the end of some of us had not the bomb been a dud.

The city was in flames and the roads were blocked. Estimated civilian casualties were 250 killed, 3000 wounded. We became separated from General Ridgway and his party and spent the night with British MPs three miles south of the town of Eindhoven. After having gone through the day without food, a bottle of whisky Colonel Henry had with him was greatly appreciated.

British engineers completed the bridge at Zon and the Guards Armored advanced at 0615, contacted the 82nd at Grave at 0820, and together they attacked the Nijmegen bridge. Violent fighting took place until midnight.

At Arnhem four battalions attempted to fight their way through the western part of the city and reach the 2nd Parachute Battalion at the north end of the Arnhem bridge, but failed. Meanwhile the troops at the Arnhem bridge were being attacked from three sides and their casualties mounted rapidly.

Weather seriously interfered with air resupply and reinforcements. Failure of 258 gliders carrying reinforcements for the 82nd Division to get off seriously handicapped our attempt to take the Nijmegen bridge.[4]

[4] LATER: Here is a note from my Chief of Staff telling of the second day's difficulties:

Dear Boss:

We had a helluva time yesterday 19 Sept. with weather. Fortunately about half couldn't clear and remain at bases. IX Troop Command dispatched 445 a/c and 385 gliders. 27 a/c missing. 26 gliders ditched in Channel and 23 missing. 62 returned to home bases, 34 released on continent, 19 in UK. 221 released on LZs.

British lost 18 out of 190 planes trying to drop resupply to 1st British A/B. The 1st British A/B are in a tight spot. Had been kicked off DZ and radio not working, so we dropped in



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Following is the message from General Eisenhower:

The initial major operation of the Allied Airborne Army has already proceeded sufficiently far to confirm the wisdom of the decision to organize all our airborne forces under single command. Individually your divisions have previously exhibited unexcelled skill, courage, and resolution. But the current operation marks the first attempt in warfare to utilize a number of airborne divisions against a single major objective. The perfection of your staff work is demonstrated by the complete coödination between air, ground, and airborne forces, and this coördination has resulted in maximum tactical effect. I congratulate you and your deputy, General Browning, together with all officers and ranks serving under you. Best wishes and good luck for the future to every man of the Allied Airborne Army.

*(Signed)* EISENHOWER.

HOLLAND, *20 September 1944 (106).* On arrival at Hqs. of the 506th Parachute Infantry, Col. Robert F. Sink told us that we had slept 2,000 yards from a heavy German concentration. We remained until 1230 to see General Taylor, who made his way through from his CP six miles away. During

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German territory and got shot with flak for our pains. Have now established radio contact thru PRO channel and know their location and where they want supplies dropped today. Also dropping Polish paras in area they asked for to help. The 1st British is in sight of, but do not hold bridge at Arnhem.

Last report 82nd and Guards Armored were fighting in center of Nijmegen. Bridge not captured at time.

Here is message from Ike and my replies in your name. Hope it is all right. I felt it would do lots of good to get it to troops at once.

Don't worry. We are all doing everything possible to relieve situation for 1st British A/B. Will get them something today if humanly possible.

Thought you would want this to talk about at SHAEF.

Hastily,

PARKS

P.S.: H-hour today 1700, if weather permits. It looks bad now.



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all this time all roads into Eindhoven were being heavily shelled.

The struggle for the Nijmegen bridge was one of the most brilliant and daring episodes of the war. Bill Downs of CBS gave a graphic description of the battle, which he described as ". . . a single, isolated battle that ranks in significance and courage with Guam, Tarawa, and Omaha Beach." His report is printed here as a tribute to the gallantry of the men, both British and American, who died together:

American airborne infantry and British tanks beleaguered the streets of Nijmegen only 300 yards from the bridge that night, but they couldn't get it. A daring plan was drawn up. Wednesday morning [20 September], the infantry [506th] made its way to the industrial outskirts along the river bank. . . . British tanks protected troopers in the street fighting, acted as artillery when the crossings were made. . . .

Twenty-six assault boats were in the water. Two hundred and sixty men would make the first assault. Waiting for them on the other bank were 400 to 600 Germans. . . . The shelling continued. A smoke screen was laid, but it wasn't very effective because of the wind. . . . Men slumped in their seats. . . . Of those 260 men, half were wounded or killed . . . only 13 of 26 boats came back. . . . Others didn't wait for boats. Some stripped off equipment, took a bandoleer of ammunition and swam the river, rifles on their backs.

There was bitter bayonet fighting and Americans died, but more Germans died. British tanks and American Airborne Infantry [2nd Bn., 505th] began their frontal assault on the southern end of the bridge at the same time as the river crossing started. . . . The southern end of the bridge has a huge circular island approach. In this island were four self-propelled guns. There was nothing to do but rush the guns. So the tanks lined up four abreast and all roared into the street, firing. . . . The American airborne troops and British tankmen seized the south end of the bridge. Only tanks could get across at first because half a dozen fanatical Germans remained high in the girders, sniping. The Nijmegen Bridge was in our hands intact as a



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monument to the gallantry of the 82nd Airborne soldiers, those who crossed the river, those who stormed it from the south."

At Arnhem the situation became grave. The 1st Parachute Brigade, which had held the north end of the Arnhem bridge for three days, finally lost control of it at midday. Most of the supplies dropped to the "Red Devils" fell into enemy hands.

The remainder of the 1st Airborne Division was defending the perimeter to the west against increasing enemy thrusts. Tanks, self-propelled guns, and mortars were shelling the area mercilessly and enemy infiltration was forcing a gradual contraction of the lines. The dressing station, with the wounded, was lost. Enemy planes strafed the troops frequently during the day. By nightfall the area held still included the northern terminus of the Heaveadorp ferry, but weather prevented the Polish parachutists from dropping.

PARIS, *21 September 1944 (D-plus-107).* Called to a conference at SHAEF to discuss General Montgomery's urgent request for an airborne operation on Walcheren Island. With the backing of ACM Leigh-Mallory, I convinced General Eisenhower that the airborne operation was not sound. General Eisenhower sent a message to Field Marshal Montgomery informing him that airborne troops would not be employed against Walcheren. He stressed also that this decision was in no way due to a possible high rate of loss being suffered by airborne troops, but was due entirely to terrain characteristics which made the operation intrinsically unsuited as an airborne task.

The situation at Arnhem was now critical. The First Para Brigade at the Arnhem bridge, which had dwindled from 500 to 100, was forced to surrender when supplies and ammunition ran out. The defense perimeter of the "Red Devils" continued to contract as German pressure increased. It was now roughly one mile square. Rations were one for three men. Despite the bad weather half of the planes carrying



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the reinforcing Poles got through and dropped 750 men. Their plan to cross on the Heaveadorp ferry failed because the enemy now had control of it. The Guards Armored made a strong effort to push up the main road from Nijmegen to Arnhem, but they were stopped by an effective tank screen near Ressen.

ASCOT, 22 *September 1944 (D-plus-108)*. An encouraging message came from General Browning in reply to an offer by General Hakewill-Smith, commander of the 52nd Lowland Division, to send a complete force in gliders to aid the "Red Devils." General Browning's message follows:

"Thanks for your message but offer not repeat not required as situation better than you think. We want lifts as already planned including Poles. Second Army definitely require your party and intend fly you in to Deelen airfield as soon as situation allows."[5]

The 101st Division repulsed repeated attempts to cut the corridor near Veghel. The fighting was bitter and 119 rocket-firing Typhoons rendered valuable aid. However, the Germans finally cut the road at one point northeast of Veghel. The 82nd held its ground and helped clear the south bank of the Waal. The weather still was against us and resupply impossible. In addition rain made it impossible for the Guards Armored tanks to operate off the main road. A group of armored cars passed through and made contact with the Poles at Driel. A few improvised rafts with 40 to 50 Polish troops crossed the lower Rhine. German loudspeakers demanded the surrender of the British "Red Devils," but they fought on. Rations were running out. It was estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 German troops now opposed the beleaguered garrison.

[5] LATER: As it turned out, General Browning was overoptimistic. Lack of communications with the British at Arnhem prevented him from fully appreciating the plight of the "Red Devils." All radios except one for press messages were smashed on landings.



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ASCOT, *23 September 1944 (D-plus-109).* The weather, which had been so unfavorable for four days, improved. Troops and supplies were sent to the hard-pressed "Red Devils," and the remaining glider lifts were sent to the 82nd and 101st Divisions. 123 British Stirlings and C-47s transported the supplies to Arnhem, but the drop was not a success; most of the ammunition and supplies fell into enemy hands. Polish parachutists were dropped from 41 U.S. planes on the south bank of the Lower Rhine.

In the crucial areas north and south of the Lower Rhine west of Arnhem, a desperate fight was going on to link up. Approximately 360 Polish troops crossed the river the night of the 23rd, but they were only able to take over such ammunition or supplies as they could carry on their backs. Ferrying in daylight was impossible because German artillery had the crossing under fire.

The 101st, with the 32nd Guards Brigade, cleared the highway above Veghel which the Germans had cut yesterday.

ASCOT, *24 September 1944 (D-plus-110).* This was a day of disappointment. Efforts to get troops across the Lower Rhine to the British 1st Division met with failure. A few got across, but not enough to make a firm juncture.

Gen. B. O. Horrocks, Commander of British XXX Corps, ordered every risk to be taken to relieve the "Red Devils." The Guards Armored Division was assigned the task of warding off the German strength on the right flank from the Waal to Elst.

The defensive area of the 1st Airborne Division had contracted until it was approximately 1,000 yards by 1,500 yards. The shelling and mortaring was incessant and at least 50 enemy aircraft strafed the troops.

ASCOT, *25 September 1944 (D-plus-111).* The final decision was made by General Browning and General Horrocks to withdraw all forces from Arnhem. General Dempsey yesterday gave permission to withdraw any time conditions war-



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ranted it. This decision was dictated by the inability to cross the river in force, the strength of the enemy below the Lower Rhine, and the cutting of the supply corridor to the south.

The 101st Airborne Division was engaged in heavy fighting around Koevering all day. The enemy held to his position astride the highway and at last light still held a small section of it.

The 82nd Airborne Division successfully cleared the area in front of Beek, which for several days had constituted a slight German salient into our lines. The Nijmegen bridge was bombed by 40 enemy aircraft. One bomb hit the bridge, but it remained passable.

ASCOT, *26 September 1944 (D-plus-112).* The withdrawal of the remnants of the 1st Airborne Division was successfully accomplished during the night of 25–26 September. The troops made their way through enemy lines across muddy fields, under constant fire, to the river bank where most of them crossed in assault boats, barges, and rafts. Some swam the 150 yards of swift-running water. Once on the southern bank, they had to walk several miles in a drizzling rain before reaching the assembly area, where they were loaded in vehicles and carried back to Nijmegen. They left over 1200 wounded behind in Arnhem, for whose care arrangements had been made with the Germans.

Those who got back were: 1,741 men of the 1st Airborne Division, 160 Polish parachutists, 75 of the 4th Dorsetshire Regiment, and 422 glider pilots. Some were still on the north bank when daylight made further crossing impossible.

It was a tragic withdrawal for these men who had fought against overwhelming odds for more than eight days. Right up to the end it had seemed that relief could be accomplished. The German tactic of continuous pressure against the supply line in the Veghel area hurt us. The interdiction of this road for 36 hours beginning the afternoon of 24 September was a vital factor.



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BRUSSELS, 27 *September 1944 (D-plus-113).* The final phase of MARKET occurred the night of 26–27 September. The remainder of the 1st Division was successfully evacuated by the morning of 27 September. The 1st Airborne Division will be brought back to Brussels and then flown to England. The Polish Brigade will continue as a fighting unit under the Second Army.

The following tables for the 10 days, 17 September to 26 September inclusive, give the vital statistics on Operation MARKET:

TROOP CARRIER OPERATIONS

| | REACHED OBJECTIVE | | | | LOST | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total A/C[6] | Para A/C | Rsply A/C | Gliders | A/C | Gliders |
| U.S. | 3601 | 1281 | 681[7] | 1639 | 92 | 130 |
| British | 1251 | 12 | 601 | 638 | 72 | 2 |
| Total | 5152 | 1293 | 1282 | 2277 | 164 | 132 |

Note: A/C—Aircraft
Para A/C—Parachute-troop-carrying aircraft
Rsply—Resupply aircraft
Tugs—Aircraft towing gliders
Airlanded—Resupply on troops delivered on ground from aircraft

TROOPS AND SUPPLIES DELIVERED

| | Troops by A/C & Glider[8] | Tons Freight by A/C & Glider[9] |
|---|---|---|
| U.S. | 29628 | 3164 |
| British | 9992 | 1431 |
| Total | 39620 | 4595 |

[6] Includes tugs.
[7] Includes 209 airplanes airlanded.
[8] 21074 by parachute.
[9] 2273 tons by parachute.



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### Air Support

| AIR FORCE | AIRCRAFT DISPATCHED | LOST |
|---|---|---|
| Eighth Air Force | | |
| Fighters | 2273 | 87 |
| Bombers | 1127 | 15 |
| Ninth Air Force Fighters | 209 | 1 |
| Air Defense Great Britain | 1627 | 13 |
| 2nd TAF | 534 | 7 |
| RAF Bomber Command | 402 | 2 |
| Total | 6172 | 125 |

CLAIMS AGAINST ENEMY AIRCRAFT

| | |
|---|---|
| Destroyed | 160 |
| Probably Destroyed | 7 |
| Damaged | 39 |

* * * *

ASCOT, *28 September 1944 (D-plus-114).* Losses for the two American divisions in the Holland operation have been reported as follows:

| | Killed, Wounded, and Missing | |
|---|---|---|
| | Officers | Enlisted Men |
| 101st Division | 170 | 1,904 |
| 82nd Division | 102 | 1,567 |
| Total | 272 | 3,471 |

It will be several days before the casualties of the "Red Devils" and the Poles can be tabulated.

CRANWELL, ENGLAND, *29 September 1944 (D-plus-115).* Met Maj. Gen. R. E. Urquhart, D.S.O., commander of the lost British Airborne Division, on his return from the Continent. He is a big, fine-looking soldier and appeared to be very well considering what he had been through. On D-day, he said, he went into Arnhem to find out what was happening to the First Brigade and, after getting the information he sought, he tried to get back out of town to the west. He was cut off and had to spend the night at First Brigade Hqs.



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He remained cut off during the next day, and on 19 September, as the situation was deteriorating rapidly in the town, he decided that he would have to make a dash to the west in an effort to break through the enemy opposition and reach the main body of the division. He and Brig. G. W. Lathbury, D.S.O., M.B.E., (Commanding First Parachute Brigade), and one or two other staff officers, left Hqs. on foot and ran down the street to the west.

Brigadier Lathbury was hit in the back by machine-gun fire. He was carried into a house where the Dutch people promised to look after him, and General Urquhart continued his escape. He eventually reached the inner perimeter of the main body of the division after having killed a German who tried to hold him up.[10]

General Urquhart received a fine letter from General Montgomery from which the following excerpt is, I believe, worth quoting:

> . . . in the annals of the British Army there are many glorious deeds. In our army we have always drawn great strength and inspiration from past traditions, and endeavoured to live up to the high standards of those who have gone before.
>
> But there can be few episodes more glorious than the epic of Arnhem, and those that follow after will find it hard to live up to the standards that you have set.
>
> So long as we have in the armies of the British Empire officers and men who will do as you have done, then we can indeed look forward with complete confidence to the future.
>
> In years to come it will be a great thing for a man to be able to say:
>
> "I fought at Arnhem."
>
> (Sgd) B. L. MONTGOMERY
> Field Marshal
> IN THE FIELD C-in-C 21 Army Group

[10] LATER: Brigadier Goldsmith advised me that the War Office had refused permission to award the DSC for which I had recommended General Urquhart. He said that it was British policy to award only one decoration for any specific deed, and that they planned to decorate General Urquhart themselves.



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ASCOT, *30 September 1944 (D-plus-116).* Maisons Laffitte, a picturesque little racetrack town on the Seine west of Paris, is now advanced headquarters of the First Allied Airborne Army. The Germans had their antiaircraft hqs. there during the occupation.

HQS. 17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION, *1 October 1944 (D-plus-118).* Observed an airborne exercise by General Miley's division, after which I was the guest for lunch at the 513th Parachute Infantry mess. It was a rare treat. They served a thick, juicy steak—the kind one doesn't often get in wartime. I have noted that the airborne divisions have the best messes in the American army.

Received the following from General Marshall:

Dear Brereton: My congratulations and thanks to you, your staff and your pilots and crews for the courageous and determined manner in which they have carried out their duties in landing and supplying the divisions of the airborne army in Holland. I am requesting General Eisenhower to transmit a message to the United States ground units of the forces which are now engaged in the salient.

ASCOT, *3 October 1944 (D-plus-119).* A narrative report of Operation MARKET was dispatched to Generals Marshall and Arnold. In summing up, I reported the following to my chiefs:

Despite the failure of the 2nd Army to get through to Arnhem and establish a permanent bridgehead over the Lower Rhine, Operation MARKET was a brilliant success. The 101st Division took all its objectives as planned; the 82nd Division dominated the southern end of the bridge at Nijmegen until noon of D-plus-1, by which time it had been planned for the Guards Armored to be there; the 1st British Division similarly dominated the Arnhem bridge from its northern end until noon of D-plus-3, 24 hours later than the time set for the arrival of the 2nd Army. Hence the airborne troops accomplished what was expected of them. It was the breakdown of the 2nd Army's timetable on the first day—their failure to reach Eindhoven in 6 to 8 hours as



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planned—that caused the delay in the taking of the Nijmegen bridge and the failure at Arnhem.

The airborne operations proceeded not only according to plan but with much less loss than expected. Daylight airborne operations over enemy territory heavily defended by flak have been considered excessively hazardous. MARKET has proved this view erroneous. The great dividends in accuracy of drop and landing and in quick assembly of troops which may be had from daylight operations were enjoyed to the full. Three factors are chiefly responsible: (1) Strong supporting air forces were available and were skilfully employed to knock out flak position in advance, to beat flak down during the airborne operations themselves, and to protect the troop carriers from hostile aircraft. (2) Excellent staff work so organized the movement of troop carriers, their protection by the supporting air forces, and the drop and landing of troops as to achieve the maximum of surprise. Large forces were placed at tactically important points in a minimum of time and simultaneously. (3) Thorough training of both troop carrier and airborne personnel produced almost perfect accuracy in the drops and landings. Weapons were rapidly retrieved and units quickly formed up for the accomplishment of their initial missions.

ASCOT, *5 October 1944 (D-plus-121).* The delay in the withdrawal of the 82nd and 101st Divisions from Holland is giving me grave concern. These divisions have been in action 19 days and have sustained close to 3,000 casualties each. 21st Army Group is resisting efforts to have them withdrawn, claiming that insufficient troops are available because of the Scheldt estuary operation.

The airborne forces from Operation DRAGOON (code name for the airborne invasion of Southern France in Operation ANVIL) will join the First Allied Airborne Army. They number 395 officers, 4 warrant officers, and 5,446 enlisted men.

ASCOT, *6 October 1944 (D-plus-122).* Lieut. Bruce E. Smith, an air support communications officer who participated in Operation MARKET, is back after having spent eight days in the thick of the fighting at Arnhem. On the flight



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in they caught a terrific concentration of flak about 5 miles short of the DZ, and the tow plane caught fire. They cut loose in their glider, landing in a field where there were many Dutch civilians. He used the code word "Oranje" until he located a major in the Dutch underground. He helped them reach their Hqs. building. Luckily a B-17 came over at this time, distracting the attention of all the German guns. The second day many of his comrades died. That night he went out with a patrol looking for snipers. He shot one, who fell about 20 feet out of a tree.

The Arnhem experience left a vivid impression on Lieutenant Smith, who said: "I learned that men, born and bred as free men, have a great strength and will power which they never suspect until they need it. I saw men hungry, exhausted, hopelessly outnumbered—men who by all rules of warfare could have surrendered and had it over with. I saw them shelled until they should have been hopeless psychopathics. And through it all they laughed, sang, and died because they had been told this battle would shorten the war."

Lieutenant Smith said perhaps the greatest tribute that will ever be paid the men at Arnhem came from a German prisoner, a major of the Prussian type. He was confined in a cage about 200 yards from Division Hqs. The other prisoners were constantly complaining they were not getting enough food (they were getting more than we were). The German major called the men together and his speech, overheard by British officers who understood German, was reported by Lieutenant Smith as follows: "These men have stood up under the most terrible artillery bombardment I have ever seen. They have fought on without food and sleep for several days. Even though they are our enemies, they are the bravest men I have ever seen. When you complain, you make me ashamed of us Germans. I suggest you be quiet and follow their example." Lieutenant Smith expressed admiration for the resupply crews, saying that he personally saw three planes hit and catch fire, and the pilots, instead of saving themselves, calmly dropped their cargo and then crashed in flames.



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He quoted a Polish captain as saying: "There isn't a man flying resupply who doesn't deserve the V.C."

On orders to evacuate, Lieutenant Smith was in General Urquhart's party. General Urquhart filled a cup with whisky and gave everyone a sip. Then a chaplain led them in the Lord's Prayer, after which they started to evacuate under shell fire. On their way out, the man behind Lieutenant Smith was killed—the 14th man to be killed within a few feet of him.

ASCOT, *7 October 1944 (D-plus-123).* After the withdrawal from Arnhem, hard ground fighting continued in Holland. On 27 September the 82nd repulsed a German attack, using flame throwers, and two days later the bridges at Nijmegen were rendered temporarily unusable by submarine charges. The road bridge was repaired quickly for one-way traffic. The 101st repulsed a strong counterattack around Schijndel on 29 September. The corridor was widened to the east in the southern sector and to the west between the Maas and the Waal.

ASCOT, *10 October 1944 (D-plus-126).* General Browning spoke in glowing terms of the fighting ability of the 82nd and 101st Divisions. General Parks got the same report from General Horrocks. "I never heard an Englishman as enthusiastic as General Horrocks was when he began extolling the 82nd and 101st," said General Parks.

General Parks reported the following résumé of what General Browning thought was the reason for the failure to link up at Arnhem:

(1)Intelligence: It was a quite definite surprise to all echelons of command to find the degree of resistance that the Germans offered in opposing the northward advance of the XXX Corps. The 12-hour check suffered by the Guards Armored Division south of Eindhoven on D-plus-1 had a very considerable repercussion on the operation as a whole.

(2) Intercommunication: One of General Browning's greatest



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handicaps was ignorance of the situation at Arnhem during the opening days of the operation. For the first 48 hours he had no news of them at all and, after that, information was so delayed as to be out of date before it reached him. He felt that had he had more consistently up-to-date information about the situation it might have been possible to reach them sooner. Until about D-plus-4 nobody realized the seriousness of their situation. The general failure of communications is ascribed to the fact that his Corps signal section had been constituted only three weeks before the operation commenced.

(3) Weather: The weather had two important influences on the operation. First, it hindered resupply, and secondly, it delayed the arrival of reinforcements. As an example: The delay due to weather of the arrival of the 325th Glider Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division meant a delay in the advance of Infantry north of Nijmegen, the reason being that it was necessary to hold the Grave bridge at strength and there was no Infantry reserve until the arrival of the 325th Glider Regiment.

(4) Air Support: The comparative lack of air support for the 1st Airborne Division was due partly to weather and partly to the prohibition of the area to 2nd TAF during the time when airborne forces and resupply were flying in.

ASCOT, *13 October 1944 (D-plus-129).* I quote the following from a letter I received from General Arnold:

There has been discussion among American commentators about the failure to obtain the full possible measure of success at Arnhem. To meet this point there was presented at an off-the-record background Press Conference, now being held in the Air Staff weekly, a detailed map showing our front-line position after your retirement south of the Lek. The hypothetical question was asked whether that indicated military failure or military success. In sending my commendatory message to you I stated my pleasure at your success, and I meant success.

In this connection there is a matter which is of concern to us. . . . There has at all times been in the Air Staff a very strong interest and belief in airborne operations. It was their organization here which initiated efforts to convince theater planners to try bold airborne employment before OVERLORD and also before



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ANVIL. Nevertheless I regret to say that my Staff feel that they sense a reluctance in the theater to consider advice or suggestions regarding airborne operations or to accept observers from Washington. . . .

From the limited data available here I would offer one conclusion on your initial operation. . . . It appears to me that the success of the Air Commando operations in Burma, and to some extent the inability of your British First Airborne Division to achieve its objective, indicate that the key to the success of large-scale airborne operations lies in the seizing of airfields or landing strips in the initial phases of such operations. From this distant viewpoint . . . I feel quite strongly that future airborne operations must be focused about airbases if the air-transported force is to remain active and effective. It seems clear that an airborne force cannot rely completely on the advance of any ground force.

I strongly agree with General Arnold's airborne views. Since assuming command of the airborne army I have continually pressed for bold airborne operations in mass. General Eisenhower also favored them. But the ground forces constantly resisted any attempt to establish an air head or a new front because of their resultant loss of air resupply during that period.

I oppose, however, any suggestion that the airborne operation in Holland was a failure. It was an outstanding success. We accomplished every mission assigned us in the original plan. However, the combined airborne-ground operation was not a complete success because the ground forces did not make contact at Arnhem on schedule.

ASCOT, *14 October 1944 (D-plus-130).* This post was officially taken over by the First Allied Airborne Army from the Ninth Air Force at a review and ceremony attended by General Browning and Brigadier Walch of the British Airborne Corps and others. The Ninth Air Force Hqs. has moved to Chantilly, France.



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MAISONS LAFFITTE, FRANCE, *18 October 1944 (D-plus-134).* From 7 to 16 October no great changes took place in the Holland corridor. General Browning's Corps Hqs. were withdrawn on 9 October, returning to England. The 82nd passed to the command of the British XXX Corps, and the 101st passed to command of the British XII Corps.

A casualty report covering 30 days of Operation MARKET was issued:

| | *Killed* | *Wounded* | *Missing* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Airborne Division (British) | 322 | 240 | 6424[11] | 6986 |
| 1st Polish Para Brigade | 34 | 142 | 207 | 383 |
| 82nd Airborne Division (U.S.) | 336 | 1912 | 661 | 2909 |
| 101st Airborne Division (U.S.) | 573 | 1987 | 378 | 2938 |
| Total | 1265 | 4281 | 7670 | 13216 |

ASCOT, *19 October 1944 (D-plus-135).* It is apparent from his last letter that General Arnold has given a great deal of thought to airborne problems, and he confesses that "we are still groping for the principles which must be used as guides whenever large airborne forces are employed." He agrees with my opinion that the airborne divisions should be assigned to the Air Force, permitting one commander to have at his disposal and direction all the means to accomplish the mission. His closing sentence is: "In future wars I envisage large airborne armies under the complete control and command of the Air Commander both for training and combat operations."

ASCOT, *21 October 1944 (D-plus-137).* The President has accepted my recommendation for James M. Gavin's promotion to Major General for his gallantry and leadership in command of the 82nd Division in Holland. Only 37, he is the youngest two-star general in the Army. General Gavin,

[11] A great proportion of these became prisoners-of-war.



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who came up from private, is known for his close contact with his men. His men call him the highest-ranking platoon leader in the Army. On four combat jumps he has always been the first man out of his plane. When General Dempsey met him he said: "I am proud to meet the Commanding General of the greatest division in the world today."

ASCOT, *29 October 1944 (D-plus-145).* The enemy espionage system in France is giving us serious concern. Intelligence reports that it has captured a document which indicates that the enemy had possession of correct information about the proposed Operation NAPLES II, a landing across the Rhine at Cologne—had the correct area and date.

ASCOT, *31 October 1944 (D-plus-147).* General Parks informed me that Col. Frank X. Krebs, Commander of the 440th Troop Carrier Group who was shot down in Operation MARKET, and his crew had escaped with the help of the Dutch underground. This was only one of many cases.

ASCOT, *1 November 1944 (D-plus-148).* Jet-propelled aircraft have recently been reported in many sectors in small numbers. If the enemy gets them in mass production and can train sufficient pilots, they may become a real menace. The engines are comparatively simple and easily capable of mass production by assembly of parts from dispersal factories.

PARIS, *4 November 1944 (D-plus-151).* Supreme Hqs. is continuing to put pressure on Field Marshal Montgomery to force the release of the 82nd and 101st. Keeping airborne soldiers in the front lines as infantry is a violation of the cardinal rules of airborne employment. The big difficulty is airborne replacements. They have to be especially trained. Ordinary infantrymen cannot be used as replacements. They should come out quickly, otherwise their morale will be seriously dented. They think they are better than ordinary foot



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soldiers and prove it by their vicious fighting. They resent remaining in the line after their initial job is finished.

MONTMIRAIL, FRANCE, *9 November 1944 (D-plus-156).* Landed at airstrip A-63 and came here by car with General Browning, Brig. R. W. McLeod, commander of the SAS (Special Air Service) Brigade, and Colonel Henry, for a decoration ceremony of the 4th French Battalion, SAS. On arrival we were greeted by Colonel Corniglion-Molinier, General Vallin's deputy, and Commandant P. L. Bourgoin, battalion commander.

Commandant Bourgoin served with General Leclerc in Africa and lost an arm in Tunisia. In spite of his handicap, he dropped by parachute with his troops in Brittany and carried on his guerrilla warfare against the Germans.

Inspecting the battalion I was particularly struck by the youth of recruits recently joined up from the *Maquis* and FFI. Some of them looked hardly 17. The records of this battalion, strength of about 500, show that they have killed at least 2500 Germans since D-day and wounded many more. They dropped behind the enemy's lines by parachute and were supplied by air with jeeps, ammunition, weapons, and food. They infiltrated through the German lines, joined the *Maquis* or FFI at a prearranged rendezvous, and then proceeded to raise havoc.

After the inspection General Browning presented decorations to the Battalion: 4 DSOs, 4 Military Crosses, 3 Military Medals, and other decorations. The citations read like adventure stories.

I quote in part from the citations to show the contribution made by these brave Frenchmen in their exploits behind the enemy's lines:

ADJUTANT CHRISTIAN DUSÉVAL (Military Medal)—An outstanding NCO parachutist with extraordinarily good fighting qualities. . . . At the beginning of August he began mopping-up operations in the area of Auray-Hennepont. On 4th August, his troops attacked a German convoy at the crossroad Terres Rouges, taking



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8 prisoners. On 5th August, at the same place, he killed and captured 50 Germans. On 6th August, at Baden he entirely destroyed an important convoy, killing 150 Germans, destroying 6 lorries, and taking 4 guns. On 8th August, at Brech, he captured 97 prisoners.

On 13th August, in the attack on Erdeven, he himself took charge of a mortar which he had taken from the Germans and completed the success of the day by destroying machine-gun nests.

SGT. FRANÇOIS NICOL (Military Medal)—Magnificent Warrant-Officer combining exceptional composure with exemplary courage. Dropped by parachute on 7 June, he successfully carried out the sabotage tasks. . . . He took part in the organizing and instructing of FFI battalions. . . . On 4 August his party attacked a German convoy at the crossroad Terres Rouges, and took 8 prisoners. On 5 August in the same place he killed and took prisoner a total of 50 Germans. On 6 August at Baden he completely destroyed an important convoy, killing 150 Germans, destroying 6 lorries, and bringing back 4 cannons in spite of a wound received during one of these actions. On 8 August at Brech he took 97 prisoners, including 4 officers, took an active part in the actions of 13, 14, and 15 August and displayed the same high qualities of leader and soldier.

After the ceremony we were invited into the chateau for a bottle of champagne and met the mayor and other leading citizens. Then to luncheon at the officers' mess, where we spent two hours over five courses and three kinds of wine.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, FRANCE, *10 November 1944 (D-plus-157).* Approved outlay of 2,000 francs ($40) for a wreath to be placed on the French war memorial at tomorrow's Armistice Day ceremony.

ASCOT, *13 November 1944 (D-plus-160).* General Ridgway informed me that General Taylor had been slightly wounded in the leg by a mortar fragment and would be hospitalized for a week.



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Ascot, *14 November 1944 (D-plus-161).* The 82nd Division, relieved two days ago by the 2nd Canadian Corps, is now installed in its rest area at Sissonne. They were in the line 57 days.

In the evening Generals Williams and Parks and I attended a cocktail party at Claridge's Hotel as guests of General Browning and Mrs. Browning. Mrs. Browning is Daphne du Maurier, author of *Rebecca, Jamaica Inn,* and *Frenchman's Creek.*

Paris, *19 November 1944 (D-plus-166).* Received a War Department message prompted by a newspaper statement that there were many casualties among paratroopers in Normandy because of difficulty in getting out of the triple-release American type of parachute. The British-type release is preferable. We equipped the 101st in Holland with all the British-type then available, and will reëquip the other divisions as quickly as replacements are available. The newspaper statement about many casualties resulting from the triple-release parachute is incorrect. You can get hung in a tree with the single-release parachute just as easily as with the triple-release.

Paris, *20 November 1944 (D-plus-167).* SHAEF has designated the following code names:

Operation Eruption—airborne invasion of Kiel.

Operation Eclipse—airborne invasion of Berlin. This is a change from the previous name of Operation Talisman. The present plan is to use two U.S. airborne divisions and a British brigade on the Berlin drop.

These operations were planned for execution in the event of a sudden general collapse of German resistance. Operation Eclipse was assigned the following mission: to seize Berlin airfields and establish bases for immediate air force occupation; to occupy Berlin for the purpose of seizing control of the central government; to capture high government officials; to seize government records; and to take over communica-



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tions. It was expected that ground forces would establish contact with the airborne force in about a week.

Extremely upset to hear the news that ACM Leigh-Mallory, who was on his way by air to a new assignment in the Far East, is missing.[12]

ASCOT, *21 November 1944 (D-plus-168).* I think that the prominence the press and radio gave the failure at Arnhem overshadowed the absolutely heroic work of the 82nd and 101st divisions, who accomplished every one of their objectives, to say nothing of the 1st British Airborne Division. In the years to come everyone will remember Arnhem, but no one will remember that two American divisions fought their hearts out in the Dutch canal country and whipped hell out of the Germans.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, FRANCE, *25 November 1944 (D-plus-172).* After 70 days in action the 101st Airborne Division has finally been relieved and is moving to its rest area at Mourmelon-le-Grand.

PARIS, *28 November 1944 (D-plus-175).* General Browning has been ordered to the Southeast Asia Command as Chief of Staff to Admiral Mountbatten. General Browning is a fine soldier and, despite differences of opinion between two military men, I like and admire him very much. I wish him luck.

ASCOT, *30 November 1944 (D-plus-177).* Returned from the front where I discussed future airborne plans with Generals Bradley, Hodges, and Patton. "Brad" indicated that Operation CHOKER II, an airborne operation between Mainz and Mannheim in coöperation with General Patch's Seventh Army, was most likely to be employed.

We are all anxious to have an airborne operation in co-

[12] LATER: He was never found.



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operation with General Patton's Third Army, but thus far the strategic situation hasn't permitted us to get very far. General Patton desires small airborne operations to clear up local hot spots or to drop ahead of his armor to furnish bases for supply. Our plan is to employ the airborne army in mass, seize an area with airfields, and form an airhead; then have General Patton's armor slash through to link up with us.

Easy to talk to, General Patton will listen to anybody's ideas. He is a brilliant soldier and I doubt if there is a more capable field general and tactician in the world today than our own George. He may put on an act at times, but don't let that fool you. He is definitely a military genius.

ASCOT, *1 December 1944 (D-plus-178).* During November our armies from the North Sea to the Swiss border were slugging it out through the mud and muck, gradually driving the Germans back. The weather has been the worst imaginable and our gains were more often in yards than miles. At Aachen and Trier, General Hodges's First Army drove into Germany and for the first time since Napoleon the Fatherland was invaded in force from the west. Everywhere the enemy is fighting with bitter tenacity. General Simpson's Ninth Army, which went into action in early October, established a front along the Roer River, on the First Army's northern flank. South of the First Army, General Patton's Third Army penetrated into Germany below Luxembourg in a drive towards the Saar. General Eisenhower, while keeping the maximum pressure on the enemy, is building up his forces for an all-out offensive when the weather becomes favorable.

ASCOT, *3 December 1944 (D-plus-180).* Approved General Taylor's trip to Washington on official business in connection with the Table of Organization and Equipment for airborne divisions. Airborne operations since the invasion have shown the need for many changes in equipment and organization of the airborne army.



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LONDON, *6 December 1944 (D-plus-183).* I participated in an investiture at Buckingham Palace at which the King presented decorations to Generals Browning and Urquhart for their deeds in Operation MARKET and gave many other awards to the Arnhem heroes. I felt deeply honored.

PARIS, *7 December 1944 (D-plus-184).* My planning section briefed me on Operation ECLIPSE, the drop on Berlin. The proper liaison between the Russians, British, and ourselves has not been accomplished on this operation. This will have to be done on a very high level, but it is absolutely necessary. For one thing, we need more airfields in the Berlin area. As matters stand now, only Tempelhof Airdrome is in the U.S. and British zones.

ASCOT, *8 December 1944 (D-plus-185).* SHAEF has received a cable from General Arnold urging the use of flying bombs against the Germans. SHAEF seems willing if it can be done without loss to the present shipping schedule, and if sufficient numbers can be made available to make it worth while. Until its flight can be controlled, it is principally a terror weapon. We can't frighten the German people more than we have already with our airpower. It's my opinion that the war would have been ended by now had it not been for the Nazi party's absolute domination of the country.

ASCOT, *9 December 1944 (D-plus-186).* Maj. Gen. Richard N. Gale, DSO, OBE, MC, commander of the British 6th Airborne Division, is now Deputy Commander of the First Allied Airborne Army and commander of the British Airborne Corps. I recommended General Gale's appointment. He is a bluff, uncompromising soldier who says what he means. Brig. E. L. Bols, DSO, has been elevated from brigade commander to replace General Gale and promoted to Major General.



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PARIS, *12 December 1944 (D-plus-189)*. Discussed with Generals Parks and Stearley and Col. Phil Cochran, who joined our staff several weeks ago, possible airborne operations. Directed Colonel Cochran, an aggressive and enthusiastic young officer who is working with General Cutler in the Plans section, to make studies on the following:

(1) A plan for close resupply to the front in case an armored thrust needs it.

(2) Establishment of an airhead far behind the enemy front on which the armies could converge.

(3) An operation to assist in reaching the Rhine.

ASCOT, *13 December 1944 (D-plus-190)*. On return from France received the distressing news that a Horsa (British) glider had crashed in an exercise, killing 33 soldiers of the 17th Airborne Division. This affects me deeply. When men are killed in combat they die a soldier's death; but to die on a training mission is a tragic and untimely end.

PARIS, *17 December 1944 (D-plus-194)*. At Commanders' Meeting at Versailles it was announced that the Germans had attacked along the front between Monschau and Trier. Tooey Spaatz remarked to me: "If the Germans are going to put on a counterattack, now is the time for them to do it, because I don't think we'll be able to put a plane in the air for three days. The weather is all against us."

ASCOT, *18 December 1944 (D-plus-195)*. First definite information came today that the German counterattacks, started day before yesterday in the Ardennes, were assuming serious proportions. Early in the morning the Troop Carrier Command received a request for a resupply mission to the St. Vith area where two regiments of the 106th Division were cut off. SHAEF directed that the 17th Airborne Division be sent by air or the fastest means available from England to the Continent and concentrated in the Reims area. General Ridgway called and said he had been receiving messages indi-



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cating "certain moves" of the XVIII Corps (Airborne) and that he desired more information. Another message from SHAEF directed that the XVIII Corps be placed under command of the 12th Army Group and "forthwith move to the Bastogne area." Ridgway prepared to leave by first light in the morning. It appears that the Germans have penetrated our thinly held lines and, with the weather against us, we may be in for a tough time.

PARIS, *19 December 1944 (D-plus-196).* It is clear by now that Rundstedt has massed the bulk of his forces—20 Divisions and considerable armor—under cover of fog and bad flying weather behind the lines facing the Ardennes and will attempt a major breakthrough. From Monschau and Trier, a front of about 75 miles, we had initially only four divisions.

Reinforcements had to be rushed to the Ardennes. The Supreme Commander immediately called upon the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, which had been through a bitter campaign in Holland and were being refitted and reëquipped in the Reims area for future airborne operations. Farthest from their minds was a commitment to return to action. The 101st was in the rest areas and preparing to play a football game on Christmas Day. Their division commander, General Taylor, was in Washington on official business, and Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe was in command. That was the situation when Col. Ralph P. Eaton, C/S of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps, called General Gavin at Headquarters of the 82nd Division at 1930 hours, 17 December, to relay a message to me. Gavin reported: "Colonel Eaton has just received a call from SHAEF. The situation appears critical. The airborne divisions are to be prepared to move within 24 hours."

I instructed Colonel Eaton to issue orders to the 101st Airborne Division to prepare immediately for movement. I also alerted the 82nd division for movement.

The Oise Base Section already had trucks rolling towards Suippes and Sissonne, where the 82nd was quartered, and to



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Mourmelon-le-Grand, the 101st's area, to transport the two divisions to the front.

PARIS, *20 December 1944 (D-plus-197).* In less than 24 hours both the 82nd and 101st were in position 125 to 150 miles away. It was one of the swiftest and most efficient moves ever made in the war. They were assembled, supplied with rations and ammunition, and cleared from their base areas in less than 18 hours. The 82nd, assigned the job of holding the north shoulder of the flank, established its CP at Werbemont, Belgium. The 101st was given the task of holding Bastogne, hub of seven highways and three railroads. On the march the 101st met retreating civilians and scattered soldiers who told them: "Germans are coming this way." By noon yesterday the 101st had set up a circular defense of Bastogne and repulsed the first fierce attacks of German armor from three directions.

The Supreme Commander directed that the movement by air of the 17th Airborne Division begin as soon as weather permits. He also directed that the British 6th Airborne Division be moved to the Continent by water with first priority.

PARIS, *21 December 1944 (D-plus-198).* G-2 informed us that a large number of assassins, dressed in U.S. and British uniforms, speaking fluent English and carrying U.S. and British equipment, are behind our lines and supposedly enroute to Paris to assassinate General Eisenhower and other high-ranking officers. These assassins were supposedly trained and led by Lieut. Col. "Scarface" Skorzeny, who rescued Mussolini after the capitulation of Italy.

The 101st is holding Bastogne against heavy attacks by Panzer Lehr Division, German 6th Parachute Division, and two other crack divisions. When the VIII Corps asked the 101st on the radio telephone what the situation was, Lieut. Col. H. W. O. Kinnard of the 101st replied: "Visualize the hole in a doughnut. That's us." If the Krauts ever inter-



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cepted this message they wouldn't know what the hell we were talking about.

PARIS, 22 *December 1944 (D-plus-199).* Emergency air supply was laid on for the 101st. In order to overcome the bad weather, it was planned if necessary to jump two pathfinder teams (two planeloads) into the drop zone and have resupply planes operate individually on the pathfinder aids.

All resupply missions had to be cancelled. Hitler couldn't have had better weather for his counterattack if he had ordered it himself. The weather turned bitter cold, with visibility ranging from poor to zero.

General Patton's Third Army jumped off this morning in a powerful attack against the southern shoulder of the German salient.

The spearhead of the German drive has reached Marche, an advance of over 50 miles and only 25 miles from Namur.

PARIS, 23 *December 1944 (D-plus-200).* Bastogne is the key to the Battle of the Ardennes. Because of the terrain and weather, the side that controls the roads and communication networks will win. The Ardennes area is heavily forested with evergreens, broken by a network of deep ravines, narrow valleys, and steep hills. Snowstorms and heavy drifts make travel even on roads difficult.

The object of the German offensive is to split the Ninth and First Armies on the north from the Third Army on the south, drive to the north capturing Liége and Verviers where we have a vast amount of supplies, particularly gasoline which the Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe need desperately. German armor and infantry have surrounded Bastogne and are attacking from all sides. When repeated attacks failed to dislodge the stubborn 101st, the German Commander tried a new technique. He sent two German officers, under cover of a flag of truce, through the line demanding "Surrender or annihilation."

The German ultimatum follows:



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December 22nd 1944

To the U.S.A. Commander of the encircled town of Bastogne:

The fortune of war is changing. This time the U.S.A. Forces in and near Bastogne have been encircled by strong German armored units. More German armored units have crossed the River Ourthe near Ourtheville, have taken Marche, and reached St. Hubert by passing through Hompre-Sibret. Tillet-Libramont is in German hands.

There is only one possibility of saving the encircled U.S.A. Troops from total annihilation: the honorable surrender of the encircled town. In order to think it over, a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note.

If this proposal should be rejected, one German Artillery Corps and six heavy A.A. Battalions are ready to annihilate the U.S.A. Troops in and near Bastogne. The order for firing will be given immediately after this two hours' term.

All the serious civilian losses caused by this artillery fire would not correspond with the well-known American humanity.

The German Commander.

General McAuliffe's reply:

To the German Commander:—

NUTS!

The American Commander.

When Colonel Harper took the reply to the German officers, they were puzzled as to what it meant. Colonel Harper explained: "It means Go to Hell!"[18]

[18] LATER: On 2 January General McAuliffe told the story of Bastogne to the war correspondents at the Hotel Scribe in Paris. It is one of the most vivid and human descriptions I have ever read on any battle in history. I repeat it here because nothing that's ever been written about Bastogne catches quite so well the spirit of the gallant men of the 101st.

"I am overawed by my audience here today. This is my third visit. I was down here before to give the story on our Normandy and Holland campaigns, and there were not many here and I think they were bored. I was a little griped at having to leave the battlefield and come here and report to Lieutenant So-and-So, Room 120 of the Scribe Hotel. However, I had been invited



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to a New Year's Eve party by the war correspondents of the Third Army, so it worked out pretty nicely.

"It would take hours to give you the narrative of the days at Bastogne, so I am just going to give you a few of the high spots. Then I would like to answer questions.

"First of all let me emphasize that we all resent any indication that we were encircled. We were never encircled—we had placed ourselves in that position, and no one had the idea of being surrounded. When General Taylor got up there on the 27th he said: 'How are things? How is the Division?' I said: 'We are ready for offensive action.' He said: 'Well, I never should have doubted it, but there was so much gloom back at the rear areas I was beginning to get a bit worried.' And immediately he sent off word that the Division was ready for an attack, which they were. Actually, on Christmas afternoon I called the Regimental Commander and told him we were ready to attack. General Middleton, the Corps Commander, gave us wonderful support, I was in communication by radio telephone with him the whole time, and he will bear out and testify that I only screamed about one thing, and that was the casualties getting no surgical help and so on.

"To begin at the beginning, we were in a camp in France. I was sitting around one Sunday night, two weeks ago, having a drink before dinner when the telephone rang. It was Colonel Eaton—Doc Eaton of the XVIII Airborne Corps. He said: 'I am having trouble. Jimmy is leaving tomorrow morning, and you will have to get going at 2 in the afternoon.' I was pretty well up on the situation as it existed at the time. 'Jimmy' was General Gavin, leaving the next morning, and he meant that the 101st should leave that afternoon at 2 o'clock. I do not think it would have been possible for anything like that to happen at a more inopportune time for the Division. General Taylor was in the U.S., General Higgins was on temporary duty in the U.K., two Regimental Commanders were also in the U.K., and the other two Infantry Regiments were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ewell of the 501st (who was in the class of '39 at West Point) and Steve Johnson of the 502nd who was very seriously wounded in Holland. So that was the present situation.

"The Chief of Staff had been dead a week, and I was operating with a new Chief of Staff who was a very fine administrator —had been with G-1—but had no tactical background. Our replacements—we had several thousand replacements—had been training for about a week. It amazes me to think that General Taylor and I had previously discussed this thing and figured it



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would not be possible for the 101st to go into combat before February 1st. It would take that long to get the replacements trained.

"I called a meeting with the Regimental Commanders, and we started getting our supplies. They did a wonderful thing in supplying us. Everybody was ready to leave the next afternoon, and we left in 500-odd trucks. Nobody slept except me. I took off for Bastogne the next day with Harry Kinnard, our G-3, and there I reported in the Corps Hqs. to General Middleton.

"The situation was very confusing. Nobody knew the score, or where the enemy was, or much about our own troops. . . . The 10th Armored Division was split in three parts: one at Noville, one here somewhere [indicated], and the third part was on this ridge [indicated]. But they didn't know exactly what to do, or how the Division would be used. They told me to find a bivouac area somewhere about here [indicated]. By that time it was 3 o'clock.

"The 101st got in about 2 o'clock in the morning with the 907th Battalion attached. I said to General Middleton: 'Let's take the 1st Regiment and move it to east, and attack to clear up the situation.' He did not bat an eyelid or ask a question—just said 'Okay' and off he went. We got to this place [indicated] and ran into all sorts of small-arms and tank fire. That was the beginning of a series of attacks from every direction. They attacked here two or three times, attacked back from Noville, and finally Christmas Day . . . with about 50 tanks from the west. I am not going to try to give you a picture of all that stuff because I just don't have it myself, I don't remember the sequence of it, but I will give you the high spots.

"The great tragedy for us was the loss of the hospital on the night of the 19–20th. It was attacked here, and some time after midnight a German column came in there and started shooting. They found out it was a hospital and stopped firing, and a German officer gave them 30 minutes to get the patients and leave. Then the Germans left with all the surgical items and supplies. A few of our men got away. Actually one soldier escaped and then remembered there was a quart of Bourbon whisky down there and went back and got it. He presented it to me last night, and I appreciated it.

"The wounded started coming in and we had only the Detachment medics to take care of them. There was no surgeon in the place. For example, there was no doctor who could tackle the



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job. These wounded were magnificent, really terrific. I just can't tell you how wonderful they were."

QUESTION: "I don't quite understand what happened to the other ones. Did the Germans take them—the ones that were in the Field Hospital?"

ANSWER: "Yes, the Germans took them."

QUESTION: "Did the Germans take the medical staff as well?"

ANSWER: "The surgical items, the surgeons, the whole works. As I say, a few escaped, but all the important fellows—all the surgeons—were taken."

"Well, we took care of the wounded as best we could, and, as I say, they were magnificent. I used to go over and see them. They hated this bombing—in fact everybody hated it, it was pretty shattering. I went over one day and there was a boy lying on a stretcher with a bone fractured. He said: 'I am getting along fine, General. We have a new name for ourselves.' I asked him: 'What is it?' He answered: 'We call ourselves the Battered Bastards of the Bastion of Bastogne.' Another boy came up and said: 'Sir, I wish you would send me back to my outfit.' I asked: 'What is the matter with you?' He said: 'I have trench feet—I cannot wear my own shoes, but I borrowed some boots from a truck driver and I can put them on and I can walk.' That is the spirit they have.

"We confiscated some cognac and gave the wounded two or three shots and they were very appreciative. Major Wisely did a wonderful job. After about three days all the doctors that were there were just punch-drunk and were reeling on their feet, but they took great care of these wounded. I talked to Doc Moore, who had seen every one of our wounded at the clearing station, and he told me that only one man had asked for morphine."

QUESTION: "Out of how many?"

ANSWER: "About seven or eight hundred."

"On Wednesday the 20th, I was sent for by Corps Headquarters to see General Middleton. The Corps had moved out—they moved in a hurry, so fast that they left their liquor supplies behind. I reported to General Middleton and he gave me certain instructions and certain information and said that I would probably have to withdraw from Bastogne. There was a pretty good-looking piece of ground here, and he said he would like to keep these roads under fire as long as possible. All you have to do is look at a map to see how important Bastogne was. I asked him if he wanted me to withdraw and I told him: 'I am sure I can hold it for another forty-eight hours, and if they don't throw a



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lot more stuff at me I don't believe they could ever get me out of here.' He said another German Division was coming in and it might get pretty rugged, but he left it to my discretion to defend round the town or to withdraw, and the last caution he gave me was: 'Don't get yourself surrounded.' That was a laugh.

"Well, I came back that night and moved the CP. I thought we would probably start catching it, and we really did. They threw everything in the world at us and bombed us and scored direct hits on the building in which we had been. As a matter of fact, they hit every CP we had. Some of the enemy were working round inside there cutting our wires and getting our locations, and we knew it. Every CP was hit at least once. Ewell had a 500-pound bomb come down and land in his S-3 section. When a thousand-pounder dropped on Colonel Cherry's CP, he was the only one that got out—he lost his whole staff. The bombing was pretty shattering. You heard them come over, and then they dropped their flares and so on. Then you heard this drive go right overhead, and they seemed to decelerate a bit, and then you heard the bombs start whistling—they go whistling through the air, and then a shattering crash. It was really pretty tough going for several nights in a row, and there was nothing you could do about it. We threw up a lot of flak, but you cannot see them very well.

"Now, the air support we had was something tremendous. The first two or three days there was fog, but it cleared up about the fourth day, and that was a circus. We had a boy named Parker there—a southern cousin—'Maestro,' as he called himself.

"You would hear a lot of Division commanders complain that the Air Corps is all doing strategic bombing and cannot give you close support, and all that kind of business. That is nonsense. We really had it up here, and I will ask you to ask these two soldiers of mine here with me just what it looked like. We took a few casualties because we were playing it pretty close. I think there were about 14 casualties out here. We put out a story that there were a couple of Thunderbolts being flown by Germans, so our men would sit on the ground and keep their punches up. We did not even tell the pilots they were shooting at our own men. Targets were 400 yards from the front line and bombs were dropped and fell on our men in the front lines. One of the pilots said it was much better hunting than in the Falaise Gap in which he had been operating. All the roads were cluttered with armored vehicles that the P-47s cut up. I made a special



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trip last night and told them what a great job they had done for us.

"But this Maestro always had a group around him—it really was a circus—he really knows his stuff. I don't know where he came from, but he really knows his oats. For example, an infantryman came down here on OPs, then went back to his Division and said: 'There are 4 tanks moving round in this corner.' And twenty minutes later, say, six P-47s dropped bombs and blew up all these tanks. And believe me, when the Infantry gets that kind of support it really helps a lot, and that is what we got all the time.

"The surrender demand . . . Everybody seems to think that is something—a surrender demand. It was on the 22nd they had been attacking for three days in a row down here, and this fellow has the effrontery to send in a German major with a captain and a white flag, and they presented the note. These officers brought it, and they sent it to me to read. I read it over and I was so amused I said, 'Nuts.' We sat, and I debated whether to answer it, or how to answer it, and so on, and a buddy of mine from G-3 said: 'I do not see anything better than the first remark you made—just *Nuts.*' I said, 'O.K.' and got one of the stenographers to answer it in the formal way to the German Commander: 'Nuts.' At that time, Colonel Harper came along—he commands the —th on this front—and he thought the answer was very good, and said: 'I will take the note down myself.' He took it down to this major and captain and handed them the envelope. The German major said: 'Well, do you know whether the reply is favorable or unfavorable? Because if it is favorable I am empowered to conduct further negotiations.' The Colonel said: 'Well, the answer says "Nuts."' And this Jerry said: 'Well, I don't understand *Nuts.*' And the Colonel said: 'That means—Go to Hell.' Jerry straightened up and saluted.

"The resupply missions brought in a lot of new supplies by parachute, and they flew one surgeon in about the 24th and he operated all night long. Later they sent in four more surgeons, and the more serious surgical cases got attention which was a great relief to us. The resupply was fine, and it was tough too. The flak over this area was something tremendous. I thought I had seen a lot of stuff thrown in Holland, but I saw four or five C-47s come down in one trip and they knocked down three P-47s, but we only lost one pilot.

"One of the amazing things that happened: one of the Corps Staff kept calling our G-3 for situation reports, but the only com-



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munication we had was by radio telephone and the Germans were listening to everything we said. So I instructed everyone to sound really tough and so on, and talked really big myself, except about casualties, and as a consequence our situation reports were something.

"I lost several field artillery battalions. I do not know what happened to them—they were cut off somewhere. The two battalions and part of the third were attacked by tanks and called up frantically. I was just helpless—I could not offer to send anything out there. But after that attack I drew all the field artillery inside the perimeter of Bastogne.

"It was really tough scrapping on the 20th. Our Battalion Commander was killed—a very fine man; and Major Hester took over and did a startling job. That was Wednesday. About 12 noon I called in and he told me the armor was running short of ammunition. There were tanks and S.P. guns all around the town. You cannot drive up that road, of course, without getting shot—shells and so on going everywhere.

"I had been afraid that we would have to pull something out of Noville, as we had reconnoitered roads and so on and prepared for a counterattack. I had not wanted to do it until dark. I thought we could withdraw then, but when they ran short of ammunition they started to scream about getting out of there, so we let fly with this counterattack and the pressure came off right away. Some of the boys of the 506th do not know what happened yet, but they know that all of a sudden the firing stopped up around there and we pulled the Battalion out of Noville before dark that afternoon and had practically no losses. Another Battalion was out in this area, a Battalion of the 401st —really the third Battalion of the 327th. It and 'B' company had a crossroads there and they really played hard with the Germans. As one single instance, they blew up thirteen half-tracks and guns, and these fellows just took the bazookas and with them killed I don't know how many Germans. I left them out there for a long time, but finally got them back to the town. They had a great time out there.

"The Germans' morale as evidenced by their diaries and by prisoner interrogations went down. It was a very surprising sort of study. On the 19th, the first day we got there, they were just full of beans, everything was fine. One officer's diary said that the war was getting to be fun again. On the 20th he starts complaining about the artillery. I had seven Battalions, my own four and three attached, and we had them all tied together and



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it really hurt them. Well, each succeeding day in that diary his morale was going down more and more; he was killed on the 25th and by that time he was really low. He talked about this attack and wondered why the Americans didn't surrender. The prisoners were the same way. They told us that they had not eaten for two days. Their officers told them that there was plenty of American food in Bastogne and they could eat when they got to the town.

"The really big attack came on Christmas morning from the west. One Regiment composed of Infantry and tanks attacked and went towards Champ—that was where the 502nd and 402 were.

"The 502nd stopped the attack before it broke through. I had a conference with the Regimental Commanders on the 24th to plan out the defense of this place. We had had patrols of the 502nd go out here the two nights before, and they knew the approximate German strength and so on, and I knew that there was going to be an attack. One came from that side, so we went on over the plans and I made some readjustments in the defense to give us more strength in depth, and had the artillery move some of their guns up to commanding position for direct fire against tanks. Well, as I say, they stopped this attack up here. One of the things I kept impressing on our men was to let the tanks come through but not let the infantry come through, and the men will tell you how it worked. They piled the infantry up out here and the tanks came on inside, and they knocked the German tanks every way. One Artillery Battalion—the 463rd—put out two tanks with direct fire at 800 yards, and the third one had got into these woods, so they ran down there and captured the tank intact. Some of the Infantry got back into the 502nd CP. There were a lot of them around there when Steve and his executive went back to telephone, and one took a radio and all the rest of the CP personnel grabbed guns and so on. Some of the Jerries were shot at as soon as they got outside the CP door. And when daylight came there were fifty corpses in that area alone.

"I had a force made up of stragglers and so on. A lot of stuff was getting back. The 9th Armored had some people cut off; they came back and were helpful to me. And some infantry and engineers and so on also got back. We gathered these people together, and I had some officers down here besides—we called them the 'Force Snafu.' They guarded entrances and exits to the town and so on and were very helpful.

"The armor was great. It was the 705th Tank Destroyer Bat-



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At first light on 23 December two pathfinder C-47s dropped two pathfinder teams on the northwest edge of Bastogne in order to insure proper resupply to the 101st. A total of 260 aircraft dropped 334 tons of supplies to the 101st the first day. Eight C-47s were lost to flak.

ASCOT, *24 December 1944 (D-plus-201).* On my return from the front, General Parks informed me that he had placed our Hqs. and all of our installations on the alert as the result of an intelligence report from the underground,

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talion and the 10th Armored. It never got so rough that I had to commit the Division reserves. I always had a striking force of tanks and a Battalion of Infantry, and it was never committed, and anybody's idea that we were in tough shape in there is wrong because after all we didn't have to commit our Division Reserves on any front. I think that we were not badly off. Some of the Commanders screamed for them once or twice, but they never really needed them.

"Our own morale—I don't know how to describe that. It was really terrific. When you have that kind of spirit the Commander can do anything, and when you haven't you can do nothing. All I had to do was make a few basic decisions and sit back and look confident. Of course these Airborne Soldiers are cocky anyway. I don't think you have heard the story of the visit to Napoleon's tomb. There were two lads from the 101st looking at the tomb, and one said to the other: 'That is one of the greatest soldiers who ever lived.' The other one asked: 'When did that so-and-so ever jump?' That is their typical attitude, and it is contagious just as panic is contagious. All those people that joined up in there were just as perky as anybody you ever saw. Also I had a colored QM Battalion who said they did not want to run —they wanted to stay there and fight.

"Well, that is about the story. I cannot tell you how tremendous that spirit is—it really is great. It just makes you feel you can accomplish anything. I did not think the Germans had enough tanks to take this place away from us."

QUESTION: "Was that the first time the 101st had gone into battle in trucks?"

ANSWER: "Yes. We jumped in Normandy and Holland. We always have a rear echelon that comes up by truck."



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passed on by SHAEF, that German prisoners-of-war in England might attempt a mass jailbreak during the Christmas holidays. The plot was fantastic, calling for seizure of an arsenal, an airfield, and a concentration of tanks at a depot. The British were not excited about it. They had had two or three scares like that before and were more accustomed to dealing with such situations.[14]

The 82nd, in a counterattack at Règne yesterday, captured a regimental adjutant of the 2nd SS Panzer division. He had on him the German orders for the advance of the following day and the enemy's intentions for several days. They proved of great value in stopping the enemy's drive on the northern shoulder.

A communication from Field Marshal Montgomery requested that Lieut. Col. "Tony" Tasker, British G-2 of the First Allied Airborne Army, be lent to the British Second Army for two weeks. Colonel Tasker is one of our most capable officers, but I approved the request because he'd be of more value with the Second Army during the present period than he would to us, since all of our strength is committed to action. Colonel Tasker, an old desert hand, actually called the turn in advance on the Ardennes counterattack. He worried about the situation for a couple of weeks and in our daily briefings in the First Allied Airborne Army War Room suggested the distinct possibility that the Germans might launch a counterattack. He stressed the vulnerability of the area where the 106th division was thinly spread along a 20-line front. He had no more information to go on than any other G-2 in the Army, but his estimate of the situation proved to be uncannily correct.

The 101st was under constant attack all day. A break in the weather helped them tremendously. Thunderbolts gave the German tanks and artillery a bad time, and in addition, Troop Carrier Command successfully dropped 159 tons of badly needed supplies.

[14]LATER: The British were right. The jail-break was never attempted.



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Ascot, *25 December 1944 (D-plus-202).* The 82nd made its first withdrawal in combat history yesterday. When the Vth Corps Commander first discussed the possibility of withdrawal with General Gavin a few days earlier, the 82nd Division commander objected. It was pointed out that after the forces at St. Vith were extricated from the dangerous situation, it would be costly in life and to no advantage to continue holding the salient extending to Vielsalm. The withdrawal was started on Christmas Eve. General Gavin described it as follows:

"In all the operations in which we have participated in our two years of combat—and they have been of multitudinous types—I have never seen a better-executed operation than the withdrawal on Christmas Eve. The troops willingly and promptly carried into execution all withdrawal plans, although they openly and frankly criticized it and failed to understand the necessity for it. But everybody pitched in and the withdrawal went smoothly."

Weather again prevented resupply to the 101st. It is imperative that resupplies get to them tomorrow. They badly need medical supplies, ammunition, and gasoline.

Ascot, *26 December 1944 (D-plus-203).* Last night the 4th Armored Division, advancing from the south, fought its way to within two miles of the 101st. This morning the first glider to land at Bastogne took in a surgical team and medical supplies. In the afternoon more gliders, loaded primarily with artillery ammunition, got through. In spite of fog and mist in England, 301 Troop Carrier C-47s dropped 320 tons of supplies to the 101st.

General Taylor, who flew back from Washington, telephoned from SHAEF and will join his division as soon as he can get in.

Ascot, *27 December 1944 (D-plus-204).* Rundstedt's counterattack, which had reached its peak on Christmas Day, fizzled out all along the salient. Enemy tanks in the spear-



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head were being abandoned for lack of gasoline, and our control of the communications hub at Bastogne interfered with the movement of supplies and reinforcements. Late yesterday the 4th Armored Division made contact with the 101st. Lieut. Charles Boggess, commander of the lead tank, knew he had broken through the German encirclement when he saw red, yellow, and blue supply parachutes dropping from C-47s overhead. Soon afterward trucks were rolling in with supplies and the evacuation of wounded was started. The last air resupply missions were flown to the 101st on the 27th: 188 C-47s with 162 tons, and 35 gliders with 103 tons. The C-47s that towed the gliders encountered heavy flak on withdrawal, and 13 aircraft were shot down.

The Troop Carrier Command has done a fine job in the air resupply to the 101st, and special word is due the men of the 490th QM Depot Co., who worked round the clock obtaining the supplies and packing them in parachute containers.

Before the German drive was halted, a salient extending almost to the Meuse River had been driven in the American lines. With the crisis over, the next job is to regain the initiative.

PARIS, *31 December 1944 (D-plus-208).* The 17th Airborne Division yesterday relieved the 11th Armored Division in the zone between Givet and Verdun. The British 6th Airborne Division will defend the Meuse northward from Givet to Namur on a 100-mile front.

The 13th Airborne Division, now leaving the States, will join the First Allied Airborne Army about 15 February. This will give us four U.S. Airborne divisions and two British, plus additional units.

ASCOT, *2 January 1945 (D-plus-210).* General Williams, just returned from Washington, brought a request for a study on redeployment of the First Allied Airborne Army in two phases:



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(1) Temporary organization necessary in the U.S. for staging and reconditioning of units in their move to the Pacific.

(2) A strategic and tactical plan showing the intended employment of airborne forces against Japan.

The Germans' failure in the Ardennes may hasten the end in Europe.

Yesterday the Luftwaffe made its greatest offensive effort since D-day, attacking 19 airfields, mostly in Second TAF's sector. The attack was exceedingly well briefed and executed. Losses in the British sector were 168 planes, 130 of them tactical A/C: 37 Typhoons, 65 Spitfires, and 28 B-17s. Both of "Mary" Coningham's transports were destroyed. The Luftwaffe lost about 200 planes.

ASCOT, *7 January 1945 (D-plus-215).* There are no signs of a German withdrawal from the Ardennes bulge. It appears that the enemy plans to hold in the north and attack in the south. The 101st, still on the defensive in the Bastogne perimeter, is being held up by land mines. The 17th, which has moved in alongside the 101st, has engaged the enemy in some of the bitterest fighting of the campaign, and its losses are heavy. This is its first battle. The 82nd made gains of up to four miles in its sector against fierce resistance. Severe weather made the going extremely tough.

ASCOT, *9 January 1945 (D-plus-217).* British 6th Division reports indicate the enemy is starting withdrawals from the western end of the bulge. The 17th, fighting fiercely, had two battalions cut off, but one of them fought its way out and the other infiltrated through the enemy's lines.

ASCOT, *10 January 1945 (D-plus-218).* I registered a strong protest with SHAEF about Field Marshal Montgomery's remarks on airborne troops reported in a London paper. He is quoted as saying: "It is very interesting to see how both sides—the Germans and Allies—use their airborne troops in land battles, not having dropped them from the sky. They



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use them with great advantage. The danger with an airborne force is that it is kept behind somewhere. All their thought and training and philosophy is built up in flying over to the battle and landing there. That is the approach to battle. It is what happens when they get on the ground that is difficult."

I am calling this to the attention of the Supreme Commander, in view of Montgomery's evident misconception of the use of airborne forces. As for "what happens when they get on the ground," the combat records of the U.S. 82nd and 101st and the British 1st and 6th are unsurpassed in this war. And the latest addition, the U.S. 17th, is proving in the Ardennes that it measures up to the best airborne traditions.

ASCOT, *12 January 1945 (D-plus-220).* An extremely stimulating letter came from General Arnold in which he praised "the great show put on by the airborne divisions in the Ardennes and the fine work of resupply by the Troop Carrier boys." General Arnold's broad vision was reflected in his comments on the future of airborne. He said:

It appears that the solution to the problem of insuring that we have the necessary forces for airborne operations always available is to change our present concept of the composition of an Airborne Army. To organize and hold in reserve for specific tasks special airborne divisions composed of parachute troops and airborne infantry is not in consonance with the laws of economy of force. It has been suggested that the Airborne Army should be composed of parachute divisions to spearhead the attack and seize an area into which would be flown any standard ground units designated for the operation. This is borne out by the fact that our airborne troops have been fighting in the line as infantry units on the Western Front and by the fact that in the Pacific no substantial use has been made of airborne troops as such.

In line with the above, the postwar development of equipment and training must be directed toward the transporting by air of any or all of our ground force units. I visualize the future possibility that whole armies, including armored units, will fly into areas which have been seized by parachute forces.



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General Arnold reiterated his belief that, since an airborne army is a joint force composed of elements of air and ground Forces, there "must be unified command exercised by the overall commander through his deputies in command of the component forces." It is his opinion that operations cannot be continually successful when there is "division of responsibility between air and ground force commanders or when there is transfer of overall command from air commanders to ground commanders during some phase of the operation."

ASCOT, *15 January 1945 (D-plus-223).* After almost two weeks of almost exclusive operations in the tactical area, the Eighth Air Force yesterday resumed its strategic attacks in the outer line of interdiction. A total of 189 enemy planes were shot down in the Magdeburg-Brunswick area—a new record surpassing the previous high of 134 set 2 November, 1944, when the Eighth attacked the oil refineries at Merseburg. The Germans are ultra sensitive to attacks on their dwindling oil supplies.

ASCOT, *16 January 1945 (D-plus-224).* Cumulative casualties for the airborne troops in the Ardennes battle follow:

| | *Eff Str* | *KIA* | *WIA* | *MIA* | *NBC* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 101st A/B Div. | 11724 | 421 | 2125 | 521 | 1331 |
| 17th A/B Div. | 10991 | 280 | 1559 | 990 | 621 |
| 82nd A/B Div. | 10656 | 255 | 1735 | 274 | 1697 |
| 517th Prcht Inf. Bn. | 2474 | 60 | 266 | 35 | 391 |
| 551st Prcht Inf. Bn. | 313 | 41 | 165 | 15 | 254 |
| 509th Prcht Inf. Bn. | 505 | 9 | 108 | 29 | 77 |
| | 36663 | 1066 | 5958 | 1864 | 4371 |

KEY: Eff. Str.—effective strength. KIA—killed in action. WIA—wounded in action. MIA—missing in action. NBC—non battle casualty: trench-foot and sickness.

PARIS, *19 January 1945 (D-plus-227).* The 12th Army Group yesterday issued the following orders to General Patton, who has been exercising command over the 101st.



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"Move the 101st Airborne Division with attached Tank Destroyer battalion and Automatic Weapons battalion to Saarbourg. . . . Report to Hqs. Seventh U.S. Army at Luneville. Complete security—to include maintenance of radio silence until committed, removal of vehicle markings and shoulder patches, no use of unit identifications on road signs, and no use of code names in telephone conversations—will be observed."

In the 101st's last action they took Noville and Bourcy. Before leaving Bastogne the 101st held a ceremony in the battered town square and the Mayor presented General Taylor with the city's flag. Outside the city, where four main roads converge, there is posted this sign:

*This is Bastogne, bastion of the battered*
*bastards of the 101st Airborne Division.*

ARDENNES, *20 January 1945 (D-plus-228).* Driving through constant snow and over dangerous roads, arrived at the XVIII Corps (Airborne) Hqs. last night. North of Vouziers had a collision with a jeep which seriously damaged the front of the car. After dinner discussed with General Ridgway the forthcoming attack on St. Vith, arranging to accompany the 7th Armored Division into action.

ARDENNES, *21 January 1945 (D-plus-229).* A severe blizzard during the night blocked most of the roads and delayed the jump-off. At 0800 General Ridgway and I met General Hasbrouck, commander of the 7th Armored, and we accompanied the 7th Armored's advance to the vicinity of enemy-held Boran. Practically no resistance was encountered, except for some artillery fire from the high ground. The principal difficulty was moving through the deep snowdrifts. In midafternoon left for General Miley's 17th Division Hqs. Travel was exceedingly difficult, but we finally arrived at 1900 hours. The weather dropped to zero during the night.



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ARDENNES, *22 January 1945 (D-plus-230).* Drove through constant snowstorm to Gen. Troy Middleton's VIII Corps Hqs. near Neufchâteau. General Middleton praised in glowing terms the 17th Division's fighting against German counterattacks in the Bastogne salient. He felt that the 17th saved the day, and everyone is exceedingly proud of the "Golden Talon" division. General Middleton said the 17th's losses were excessive, owing to these causes:

(1) The Germans attacked with the best troops they had in the salient, commanded by their most skillful commander.

(2) The 17th's troops were aggressive to the point of recklessness.

(3) The tank-destroyer units supporting the 17th were under strength, and one section assigned to cover the main axis of the enemy's advance on the road northwest towards Bastogne deserted its post and retreated into Bastogne. The officer commanding will be court-martialed.

The 11th Armored Division, supporting the 17th, did an excellent job and General Middleton reports that the two cannot say too many nice things about each other.

On the return journey to Paris through the snow my car skidded on the icy roads and collided with a truck. I got a cut over my eye requiring four stitches.

PARIS, *30 January 1945 (D-plus-238).* General Parks returned from visiting all Airborne Division Hqs at the front for the past week. He had more praise for the 17th's stand in the Bastogne salient. He said he had heard General Patton quoted as saying that his decision to have the 17th attack was perhaps the best decision he had made in the war. The 17th jumped off at the same time that the Germans launched their counterattack. Although the Germans were picked Panzer units commanded by Rhemer, one of their best men, the 17th stopped them cold and did not budge. General Patton feels that, if the 17th had not held, the German Panzers might have gotten in behind him as he attacked on the flank.

Everywhere we are attacking and have almost eliminated



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entirely the Ardennes bulge. Rundstedt's counteroffensive has ended in dismal failure. The enemy has lost upwards of 200,000 men, including about 100,000 prisoners, and failed to hold a single objective. Losses in tanks, oil reserves, and equipment are more than the enemy can stand. In the north the British are advancing in the Roer valley, and in the south the French are clearing the Colmar pocket.

PARIS, *31 January 1945 (D-plus-239)*. General Gale has recommended to the War Office and SHAEF that public announcement be made that any mistreatment by Germans of SAS troops (who drop behind the lines) will be tracked down and that after the war those found guilty will be punished by the Allies. The Germans have issued order that SAS troops, irrespective of the fact that they are wearing uniforms and carrying out lawful military operations, will be treated as saboteurs and shot.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, FRANCE, *1 February 1945 (D-plus-240)*. General Gale outlined the plan for an airborne operation in front of the 21st Army Group for crossing the Rhine—code name of Operation PLUNDER. The 17th, mounted from bases on the Continent, and the British 6th, mounted from East Anglia, will form the task force I have designated General Gale to command.

PARIS, *3 February 1945 (D-plus-242)*. In the biggest air attack in a week, the Eighth Air Force sent 900 heavies to Berlin, dropping 2,250 tons on the Tempelhof airdrome, the German Air Ministry, and Gestapo headquarters.

PARIS, *6 February 1945 (D-plus-245)*. SHAEF has asked for a plan for small forces of airborne troops to protect certain prisoner-of-war camps after either formal surrender or a German collapse. It is feared that the S.S., the Gestapo, or the fanatical type of Nazi may commit atrocities against our prisoners in the final debacle.



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REIMS, FRANCE, *8 February 1945 (D-plus-247).* In a discussion with General Eisenhower about Operation VARSITY (the airborne operation to participate in crossing the Rhine), he informed me that the 21st Army Group's effort is "the big push" to break into Germany.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, FRANCE, *9 February 1945 (D-plus- 248).* A SHAEF directive indicates four plans by which Berlin may be occupied initially:

(1) By fighting advance of our ground forces under OVERLORD conditions.

(2) By fighting advance of the Russians.

(3) By airborne operations under Operation ECLIPSE conditions.

(4) By overland advance of AEF under ECLIPSE conditions, whether preceded or followed by the Russians.

The Supreme Command has named General Gerow, Commanding General of the 15th Army, commander of the Berlin district.

The 13th Airborne Division has arrived in European waters and is ten percent unloaded at Le Havre and Rouen.

EPERNAY, FRANCE, *15 February 1945 (D-plus-254).* Conference at Hqs. XVIII Corps, at which General Ridgway outlined the task desired by General Dempsey, British Second Army, in Operation VARSITY. General Dempsey wants the airborne forces to land northeast of Wesel and seize the high ground. From a preliminary study General Ridgway did not think this a desirable plan. We will submit our plan at once.

The Troop Carrier Command reported their aircraft status for Operation VARSITY as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| C-47s | —1268, of which 1150 are operational. |
| C-46s | —88, with 112 due to arrive. |
| CG-4As * | —On hand: 2465; Due to arrive: 400. |
| CG-13As * | —On hand: 14; Due to arrive: 83. |

* Gliders.



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MAISONS LAFFITTE, *17 February 1945 (D-plus-256)*. German jet aircraft are becoming more numerous. The enemy is doggedly pursuing his jet training program, despite the heavy destruction inflicted on German cities, in the hope of being able to put a more effective jet force in the air at a later date.

VERSAILLES, *19 February 1945 (D-plus-258)*. Operation VARSITY was discussed at a conference with Generals Smith, Bull, and de Guingand. De Guingand said that Field Marshal Montgomery is definitely of the belief that the Rhine crossing could not be made without airborne support. When asked if the date of the ground attack would wait for weather favorable for the airborne operation, de Guingand replied emphatically, "Yes!"

EPERNAY, FRANCE, *20 February 1945 (D-plus-259)*. General Dempsey outlined to General Ridgway and myself and members of our staffs his desired scheme of maneuver and his conception of the airborne mission for Operation VARSITY. He said he considered it absolutely essential to have airborne assistance in crossing the Rhine. The airborne mission was to be twofold:

(1) Seize the commanding ground from which artillery fire controlled the whole area.

(2) Block possible arrival of enemy reinforcements from east of Wesel.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, *22 February 1945 (D-plus-261)*. General Stearley and I spent a pleasant evening with AM Coningham discussing air plans for Operation VARSITY. "Mary" is always good company.

ASCOT, *24 February 1945 (D-plus-263)*. General Gale recommends Brig. E. W. C. Flavell, DSO, MC, as successor to Brigadier Goldsmith as deputy C/S of the Airborne Army. Brigadier Goldsmith is ill.



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MAISONS LAFFITTE, FRANCE, *26 February (D-plus-265).* Received a highly appreciated note from General Patton:

My dear Brereton:

Long before this I should have written you to acknowledge my appreciation for your heroic and successful resupply of Bastogne.

Again on the 13th and 14th of February your Troop Carrier Command successfully supplied elements of the VIII Corps at St. Vith.

All members of the Third Army are deeply appreciative of your coöperation and trust that you will accept for yourself and transmit to your officers and men our admiration and thanks.

HQS. BRITISH 2ND ARMY, BELGIUM, *27 February 1945 (D-plus-266).* General Dempsey stated that, in view of the rapid progress being made on the northern front, Field Marshal Montgomery was anxious to know whether Operation VARSITY could be phased forward. The answer was yes. The 13th Airborne Division is now in camp at Auxerre, France.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *3 March 1945 (D-plus-270).* SHAEF informed me that the airborne operation for ECLIPSE is definitely not abandoned. Even if the Russians capture Berlin, the plan would be shifted to Munich or whatever city the German government moved to.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *8 March 1945 (D-plus-275).* An unexpected piece of luck came our way yesterday. The Germans, retreating to the east of the Rhine, neglected to blow the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen. The 9th Armored Division quickly crossed over and began development of a bridgehead on the east bank. Some German surely will be shot for leaving the bridge standing.

The First Army captured Cologne, which will give us an



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opportunity to examine at first hand what our air attacks have done to a large German city.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *10 March 1945 (D-plus-277).* G-1 submitted a status report on chaplains in the four U.S. airborne divisions which brought forcibly to my attention the hardships and dangers these brave men go through unarmed. Since the Normandy invasion, five chaplains have been killed in action, two missing in action, three captured, four wounded in action and totally evacuated, and six wounded in action and returned to duty. The airborne chaplains are all splendid men who bring a great deal of solace and consolation to the troopers. They'll go through anything for the men.

REIMS, *12 March 1945 (D-plus-279).* Our elaborate plan for a mass airborne operation—Operation ARENA, on which we have been working diligently—was presented to General Eisenhower. It is the Airborne Army's plan to strike at the heart of Germany. The order of battle calls for use of three Corps and ten Divisions as follows:

Three Corps: XVIII Corps (Airborne), British 1st Airborne Corps, and one additional U.S. Corps.

Ten Divisions: Four U.S. airborne divisions, the 82nd, 101st, 17th, and 13th; two British airborne divisions, the 1st and 6th; and four U.S. Infantry divisions transported by air, the 2nd, 84th, 103rd, and one additional.

Three U.S. Airborne engineer battalions.

A brief outline of the plan as given to General Eisenhower, is:

OBJECT:

a. Invade the Kassel-Fritzlar-Hofgeismar area with the First Allied Airborne Army.
b. Establish a fortress from which can be launched a decisive offensive at the east end of the Ruhr.
c. Seize the high ground east of Paderborn, thus denying the enemy this natural defensive position.



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d. Provide an airhead to which the Southern Group of Armies can advance.

General:

a. Enemy ground forces are entirely committed in defensive action on all fronts and are capable of continuing planned defenses, but are not capable of meeting an unforeseen "New Front."
b. Enemy air potential is such that he cannot prevent a large scale Allied airborne effort.
c. Enemy political situation is such that added stress at this time could cause collapse of governmental control within Germany.
d. The airborne invasion area is a valley surrounded by easily defended terrain. It contains 3 existing airfields and numerous airstrip sites. The inner communications lines are excellent. The city of Kassel is in the center of the area.

Conclusions:

a. The deterioration of the enemy from a political and military standpoint makes a large-scale airborne invasion and the establishment of a "New Front" practicable and desirable.
b. Existing forces and equipment can be made available to successfully accomplish this task.
c. The success of this operation is not contingent upon the Southern Group of Armies reaching the invasion area.
d. This "New Front" puts the Allies in position to launch offensives to cut Northern Germany from Southern Germany.

General Eisenhower was very receptive and said he'd "dearly love to have one big airborne operation before the war ended." He indicated that the operation depended on "finding the divisions." He said that if he had had ten additional divisions at Metz last fall he could have ended the war then, and that if he had ten additional divisions now above those committed to action, he could bring the war to an end quickly. I told the Supreme Commander that the plan was flexible enough to mount the operation with a minimum of four divisions, and if we had two additional divisions we could assume the offensive. ACM Sir James Robb said: "From an air point of view the operation is entirely feasible."



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In concluding, General Eisenhower remarked: "The operation has so much value that we can't possibly afford to miss planning every conceivable angle." He directed that General Bull look into the possibility of getting one or more divisions from the Mediterranean Theater to use as airlanded troops.

General Eisenhower then emphasized his concern over handling our prisoners-of-war after the capitulation of Germany. He stated that they were in desperate straits, with their rations extremely low. One marching column was allowed three potatoes per man per day—which, he said, in fairness to the Germans should include the fact that the guards themselves received the same. He stated that the food situation was so bad in Holland that one pound of potato peelings per day was the ration for each civilian in one section.

MOURMELON-LE-GRAND, *15 March 1945 (D-plus-282).* General Parks and I drove here to attend the presentation of the Presidential Unit citation to the 101st Airborne Division for their heroic defense of Bastogne. General Maxwell Taylor had General Eisenhower and the rest of us, including Steve Early, one of the President's secretaries, as his guests at luncheon. A Guard of Honor, composed of men from the Supreme Commander's home state of Kansas, greeted General Eisenhower. A sunflower decorated their guidon, much to his delight. The ceremony was very impressive, and General Eisenhower, speaking extemporaneously as usual addressed approximately 12,000 men. "Never before," said General Eisenhower, "has a full division been cited by the War Department in the name of the President, for gallantry in action. This day marks the beginning of a new tradition in the American Army."

The citation follows:

The 101st Airborne Division and attached units distinguished themselves in combat against powerful and aggressive enemy forces composed of elements of eight German divisions during the period from December 18 to December 27, 1944, by extraor-



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dinary heroism and gallantry in defense of the key communications center of Bastogne, Belgium. . . .

This masterful and grimly determined defense denied the enemy even momentary success in an operation for which he paid dearly in men, material, and eventually morale. The outstanding courage and resourcefulness and undaunted determination of this gallant force are in keeping with the highest traditions of the service."

Marlene Dietrich (USO entertainer who is a favorite with the airborne troopers) and a number of war correspondents attended, including Vincent Sheean of *Personal History* fame, on whom I must tell a joke. Vincent asked one of the other scribes: "Who is that civilian on the reviewing stand?"

"Don't you know?" was the reply. "That's the Mayor of Bastogne."

"My, he looks like an American," said Vincent.

The civilian was Steve Early.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *16 March 1945 (D-plus-283)*. G-2 reports that a counter intelligence agent spent an hour in the Wheatsheaf Hotel bar, Reading, near one of our Troop Carrier bases, and without engaging in direct conversation with any personnel picked up many items as to the movements of our C-47s, installation of parachute rigging, etc. Troop Carrier Command must stop this violation of security at once.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *21 March 1945 (D-plus-288)*. Both the Strategic and the Tactical air forces have had an intensive campaign the past month to isolate the immediate battle area, and to cut off northwest Germany from ground and air reinforcements. In addition to the neutralization of communications, intensive bombing of airfields was commenced. Particular attention was concentrated on the jet fighter airfields in northwest Germany.

The following table shows the amount of bombs dropped on the enemy transportation lines west of the Ruhr interdiction line:



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| Unit | Effective A/C | Tons Dropped |
|---|---|---|
| RAF Bomber Command | 3,748 | 17,621 |
| US Eighth Air Force | 3,168 | 7,733 |
| US Ninth Air Force | 2,429 | 4,391 |
| 2nd British TAF | 1,153 | 1,888 |
| | 10,498 | 31,633 |

TROOP-CARRIER BASES, FRANCE, *22 March 1945 (D-plus-289).* Before inspecting the airfields where the 17th Division troops are marshaled, I had a final conference with Generals Parks, Williams, and Stearley on Operation VARSITY. At the marshaling areas I talked to the commanders of all three Troop-Carrier wings and the three Regimental Combat Team commanders: Cols. James R. Pierce, James W. Coutts, and Edson D. Raff.

Günther Weber, Berlin radio commentator, speaking over the radio tonight, said: "Allied airborne landings on a large scale to establish bridgeheads east of the Rhine must be expected. We are prepared."

The pattern of our air attacks and various other factors easily apparent to all military men, plus information picked up from their agents in France, undoubtedly has warned the enemy that we are preparing an airborne operation, but it's a hundred to one he does not know where and when.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, *23 March 1945 (D-plus-290).* Set up my Hqs. in the same building with AM Coningham's Second TAF. Reconnaissance indicated that a great deal of smoke and smudge is accumulating in the battle area. After investigation it was deemed advisable not to interfere with the artillery barrage. Part of Field Marshal Montgomery's plan was to use a smoke screen on a 50-mile front to conceal our ground movements west of the Rhine. The weather remained stable, and at 1630 hours I issued orders that Operation VARSITY would be mounted as planned and executed tomorrow. The plan calls for the airborne strike to follow,



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rather than precede, the ground force assault—the first time this sequence of attack has ever been used.

At 2000 hours a heavy artillery barrage was launched east of the Rhine, covering the DZs and LZs for tomorrow's operation. An hour later the artillery barrage lifted and, under cover of darkness, the British Commandos commenced their assault crossing. The British VIIIth and XXXth Corps attacked shortly before midnight.. The U.S. Ninth Army will follow up with an attack south of the Lippe Canal three hours after midnight.

Over Radio Luxembourg the Supreme Commander issued the following proclamation to the Wehrmacht and Waffen SS:

The Supreme Commander of the Allied forces has come into possession of a secret order issued by the German High Command on October 18, 1943, and supplemented by another order dated October 1944. This secret document orders the execution of Allied airborne soldiers.

The Supreme Allied Commander therefore addresses to you the following strict warning:

One—You may encounter large or small formations of Allied paratroopers or airborne troops in the course of the war at any time. These units may be dropped behind your lines.

Two—You are expressly warned that these units are no "terrorists"—they are soldiers who are doing their military duty in accordance with their orders.

Three—The execution of uniformed airborne troops and parachutists is therefore an offense against the recognized laws of warfare.

Four—All persons—officers, soldiers, and civilians—who have any part in the ordering or carrying out of the above-mentioned order issued by the German High Command will be severely called to account and punished according to military law.

The same applies to any order which may meanwhile have been issued or may be issued in the future. The excuse of having "only carried out orders" will not be recognized.



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BRUSSELS AND SONSBECK, *24 March 1945 (D-plus-291).* The specific mission of Operation VARSITY:

To disrupt the hostile defenses of the Rhine in the Wesel sector by seizure of the key terrain by airborne attack, in order rapidly to deepen the bridgehead to be seized in an assault crossing of the Rhine by British ground forces, and in order to facilitate further the offensive operations of the Second Army.

At 0545 I received word that the leading elements of the British 6th Airborne Division, concentrated in the East Anglia (England) area, were airborne. Left by air for airstrip B-100 and went immediately to the XVIII Corps (Airborne) CP near Sonsbeck. General Ridgway joined me and we proceeded to British XII Corps CP where we found Generals Dempsey and Ritchie. The crossings by the British Second Army and the U.S. Ninth Army were made in the face of light opposition, and by dawn nine small bridgeheads had been secured across the Rhine in the Wesel-Emmerich area. We then went forward to the west bank of the Rhine, some two miles northwest of Wesel.

The first air columns over the river were approximately five minutes early. The formation was excellent, all units in good order, and the first parachute drops could be observed through glasses. Intense flak was encountered and I saw during the first 25 minutes at least nine flamers and six crashes. I saw no aircraft, however, shot down prior to the delivery of its troops. Farther to the north the Horsa glider landings could be observed through the haze. The air cover afforded by Second TAF and XXIX TAC was excellent, and after the first 30 minutes a marked decrease in the antiaircraft fire could be observed even from my observation post, about 4,000 yards away.

Left the Observation Post at 1200 and went to Field Marshal Montgomery's Hqs. with General Dempsey for luncheon. Montgomery was in good spirits, and after luncheon I had my first informal talk with him relative to future airborne operations. It was very satisfactory. He stated that, with the



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situation as well in hand as it seems, Operation ARENA in the Kassel area would be unnecessary. Doubtless his unswerving refusal to give up airborne divisions once he had them colored his opinion.

Back in Brussels reports indicated the operation an unqualified success. All of the airborne troops—approximately 17,000—were on the ground by noon. The 17th made contact with the Commandos shortly after 1200 hours and by dark had achieved all objectives. The British 6th took all its objectives by 1330 and made contact with the 15th Scottish Infantry at 1530.

The impact of the vertical envelopment was a stunning blow to the enemy. In the first day the airborne troops took over 3,500 prisoners, destroyed or reduced all the artillery positions, and tore a great gap in the enemy's Rhine defense. The way was opened to Berlin.

BRUSSELS, *25 March 1945 (D-plus 292).* One of the big reasons for the success of Operation VARSITY was the effective air support by the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces and the RAF. On D-minus-3 an intensive air attack started on the Ruhr flak defenses and targets in the battle area. Over a three-day period the Allied air forces flew 3,741 sorties and dropped 8,506 tons of bombs on flak defenses. In addition, 6,615 tons of bombs were dropped on barracks, defended towns, and military positions in the battle area. On D-day the Second TAF and Ninth Air Force threw up a screen of 900 fighters around the target area, and the Eighth Air Force sent 1,253 fighters east of the Rhine to isolate the battle sector while simultaneously providing cover for diversionary bombing of Berlin by 150 heavies of the Fifteenth Air Force, based in Italy. The Troop Carrier column was 420 miles long. The array (including 240 Liberators, which dropped 582 tons of supplies immediately after the last serial went in) was over the target area three hours and 12 minutes. Not a single plane was attacked by the Luftwaffe. Of the 46 aircraft lost by Troop Carrier Command, 39 were lost to flak, and one by



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accident; the cause of the other six losses is unknown. RAF losses were seven aircraft, all to flak.

In the battle area pockets of resistance were cleaned up during the day and a front line established from the Commandos in Wesel extending north to the 17th, holding along the Issel River to the vicinity of Dorter Rott. The 6th held along the Issel to a point approximately a mile north of Hamminkeln. A large pocket of enemy troops, numbering about a thousand, were caught between the 17th and 6th.

ACROSS THE RHINE WITH THE 17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION, *26 March 1945 (D-plus-293).* Crossed the Xanten bridge at 1500 hours and proceeded to General Ridgway's CP. Wesel was flattened out by our bombing and artillery attacks. There is nothing left in the city's main section except rubble and a few burnt-out brick shells. Visited General Bols and General Miley, the two Division commanders, who were outspoken in their praise of the courage and skill of the pilots of the planes and gliders.

Colonel Coutts's regiment was dropped some 2,500 yards northeast of its assigned zone owing to error caused by haze and smoke. The 1st Battalion was dropped in the immediate vicinity of two batteries of 88-mm. all-purpose guns, and two batteries of 20-mm. A very sharp fight ensued, causing serious losses. Our field artillery battalion was in action at point-blank range against the German batteries eight minutes after landing. Fortunately the artillery drop was flawless, and while four pieces were lost due to enemy action, the remaining battery of the Battalion silenced the enemy artillery. The enemy was either killed or captured, including a Regimental Commander and two Battery Commanders.

Luckily this drop occurred in the area on which the British Horsas were to land. Had not these batteries been silenced prior to the 6th Division landing, in my opinion and in that of General Bols the losses would have been catastrophic. The entire first landing brigade might have been destroyed.



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Across the Rhine with the 17th Airborne Division, *27 March 1945 (D-plus-294).* Got very little sleep during the night because of the continued attacks of enemy A/C on the bridges across the Rhine.

At daylight went to the leading battalion of Colonel Pierce's regiment. Accompanied by Brig. Gen. J. G. Whitelaw, assistant Division commander, we reached the tail end of a column of British tanks, on which were riding the 17th's troopers, and our M.P.s cleared a way for us to go around the tanks. A begrimed paratrooper looking up, remarked: "Okay, fellows, unload your rifles, here come the M.P.s. The war's over."

Then he saw the three stars on my helmet and the one star on Whitelaw's helmet, and said: "Now I *know* the god-damn war is over. Here comes the big brass!"

Maisons Laffitte, *28 March 1945 (D-plus-295).* On my return to Hqs., Colonel Nolan gave me a report on the press and radio coverage of Operation Varsity. Eleven war correspondents covered the operation from Troop Carrier aircraft, and four correspondents went in with the 17th Division. The RAF carried a number of British correspondents in their planes, and Bob Vermillion, UP, went in with the British 6th Division. They had many hair-raising experiences. The courage and gallantry of most of the correspondents I've run across in this war deserves high praise. They are constantly taking unnecessary risks to get the story. Sometimes they are "problem children" because the military organization does not make ample provisions for them. Of course, they have their eight-balls as every organization does, but my hat is off to most of them.

The 11 correspondents who went in Troop Carrier planes were, Frederick Graham, *New York Times,* who flew with the Pathfinder Group; Larry Rue, *Chicago Tribune;* Paul Manning, Mutual Broadcasting Company; Jack M. Fleischer, UP; Thomas H. Wolf, NEA; Robert Wilson, AP; Capt. Eric Friedheim and T/Sgt. Roger Coster, *Air Force Magazine;*



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Pierre Maillaud, French news services; T/Sgt. Wade Jones, *Stars and Stripes;* and Richard C. Hottelet, Columbia Broadcasting System.

Hottelet and eleven military personnel who flew over the area in B-17 observation ship were shot down by flak. All bailed out except Lieut. Col. Benton R. ("Lucky") Baldwin, the pilot, who stayed with the plane and made a successful belly-landing west of the Rhine with his wing on fire. Capt. Charles Romine, Troop Carrier PRO, broke his ankle in landing. T/Sgt. Clarence A. Pearce, Troop Carrier Command correspondent, was killed when his parachute failed to open.

Two other correspondents, Bob Wilson, AP, and Capt. Eric Friedheim, had to bail out of burning C-46 Commandos and got back safely, but not until they had spent some time in the battle zone.

Howard Cowan, AP; Bob Capa, *Life* photographer; Sgt. Bud Hutton of *Stars and Stripes;* and Cpl. Bob Krell, *Yank* Magazine, all went in with the 17th. Corporal Krell was killed in ambush on D-day. Cowan's story of "How It Feels to Ride a Glider into Germany" is a vivid bit of writing. Here it is, as carried by the AP:

WITH THE SEVENTEENTH AIRBORNE DIVISION, March 24 (delayed).—

"Now," said the Sergeant, "is when you pray."

Thirteen men in a glider were diving toward a smoky battlefield 700 feet below.

The Sergeant was well-meaning, but a little bit tardy with his cue. The sky had been full of praying men ever since this glider and hundreds like it soared off toward its destination east of the Rhine.

You prayed from the moment the silken rope stretched taut from the tail of the twin-engined C-47 up ahead and the flimsy fabric craft started breaking down the runway.

And while you were praying, you heard tires singing over the concrete, reminding you there was no engine in this contraption —that it was just a big crate with wings.

You felt something akin to horror as you read the label on the



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case lashed by heavy rope to the floor: "five—antitank mines—five." And you wondered why they had to go in this glider with a bunch of medics, a radio operator, a lineman, a photographer, and a war correspondent. You wondered just how much of a bump it would take to set them off as the glider rocked and jerked and swayed in the slipstream of the powerful ship ahead. You thought of landing and remembered pictures of gliders in Normandy and Holland, all smashed and splintered—and you prayed some more.

You looked off to the left and watched the right wingtip of a sister glider, tied to the same C-47, swing perilously close. What would it be like, you wondered, if the two locked wings and you plummeted to the green fields below? Why don't they give you parachutes in gliders? Or would it do any good?

The wings of the glider vibrated violently—almost shook you out of your seat, and you knew something was wrong when the pilot began maneuvering desperately to break up a "tail flutter," a malady that shakes these things to pieces in a matter of seconds. And you closed your eyes and clenched your teeth and prayed.

Then, without an instant's warning, your seat dropped from under you. Your helmet flew off and you were on your knees on the floor. That's just the way a glider rides. The man next to you wasn't wearing a helmet and blood is streaming down his ashen face. He's a casualty even before we've been landed—his head bashed against the metal framework.

For three agonizing hours it went on this way. You'd watched the Seine and Maas Rivers slide past and knew the next big stream would be the Rhine. Before you were ready, it was below snaking across the shell-pocked plain.

Things began happening fast—too fast. Above the sustained roar of wind ripping past cloth-covered ribs of the glider, you began to hear crack! pop! snap!

"It won't last long," said the Sergeant. And in the same breath, "If anything happens to me, will you take these papers out of my pocket and destroy them? They're top-secret." He was the intelligence man.

You shook hands, wished each other luck, and glued your eyes on the pilot, waiting for him to push the lever which would cut the glider loose from the tow-plane.



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Bursts of rifle fire were accompanied now by the popping of machine guns and a guttural whoomph of 88-mm. shells. You unconsciously lift off your seat and brace as if to meet hot metal singing through the smoke. You find yourself dodging and weaving from something you can't even see.

Then the pilot's hand goes up and forward.

"Going down!" he shouts, and the nose pitches forward steeply. The speed slackens and the roar of the wind dies down and the battle noises suddenly are magnified into a terrifying din.

"Now," says the Sergeant, "is when you pray."

The right wing tilts sharply as the shadow of another glider flits past. It almost hits us.

Smoke is thick and acrid—almost like being inside a burning house. You can see half a dozen buildings aflame on the ground. Dozens of gliders are parked at crazy angles on every field. Everyone with a weapon has it cocked and across his lap.

Then, before you know it, the ground is racing underneath. You are in a pasture, crashing through a fence, bounding across a gully, clipping a tree with a wingtip. You've made it—landed and nobody hurt.

You relax for a moment, but realize a split second later that that was a mistake. Bullets are ripping through the glider.

"Get outta here! Get outta here!" someone shouts, and prayers give way to curses as first one and then another kicks savagely at the door.

Men spill onto the grass haphazardly and begin crawling toward a ditch just beyond a barbed-wire fence. You're getting shot at from a house at the other end of the meadow.

Hot lead whines overhead. Bullets uproot little cupfuls of moist green turf around you until you are digging your toes in and clawing the earth with your fingers to move forward. Your pack snags on the bottom strand of the barbed-wire fence and it seems hours before you're free.

You roll into the shallow ditch. A foot of red, slimy water makes no difference. It actually feels good trickling down the open throat of your woolen shirt and filtering into the toes of your boots, and you're tempted to drink it, for your mouth is parched.

Everyone is out of the glider. You check up and find that two



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men are hit—both medics. One has a bullet through the top of the head—it went in and out through the top of his helmet—but he's still conscious. The other was shot through the calf of the leg.

You're fairly safe for the time being unless another glider swooping in lands on you. It shears off the top of a near-by tree and makes a neat landing 100 yards down the field.

The firing slackens as minutes tick by and more gliders come in. Soon you muster enough courage to crawl out of the water—it's getting cold and uncomfortable by now—and take a cautious look around.

You find the area cleared and shooting over, at least in this pasture.

Someone gets a jeep to take the wounded to an aid station, and the rest of the party strikes out for the regimental command post.

And you pray a prayer of thanksgiving and tell yourself—if you are a common, ordinary flat-footed reporter—that you've had your first and only glider ride.

And by contrast, here's the report of the aeronautical correspondent of the *London Times,* who rode in an RAF tug plane, which affords a nice insight in the difference between British and American reporting:

To the battered German troops holding the east bank of the Rhine the approach of the First Allied Airborne Army towards the Wesel bridgehead must have seemed like a swarm of locusts —a plague against which they had no protection. For between two and three hours Allied airpower held undisputed mastery of the cloudless blue sky over western Germany. . . . The assault was on a scale which dwarfed Arnhem and the D-day landings in Normandy, and yet the Luftwaffe was powerless to intervene. . . .

I flew in a Halifax tug somewhere in the middle of the aerial procession, and by the time we arrived . . . the battle had already receded from the Rhine, leaving nothing to disturb the illusion of a peace-time beauty and tranquillity. The wide ribbon of water shimmered in the summer-like sunshine. Here and there the sparkle was broken by the wakes of assault craft ferrying over



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reinforcements and supplies, but from the height at which we were flying they might well have been pleasure steamers.

But just beyond the east bank the illusion was quickly shattered.

Away to the right a farm building was burning itself out. Near by, a field was strewn with white, blue, and red parachutes, but of their former wearers there was no trace; they had already advanced into the pall of smoke which hung like a gigantic curtain over the battlefield, hiding all that was going on underneath, blotting out the horizon and smudging the blue sky with dirty grey-brown fingers. In the middle of the field sprawled an upended glider.

As we approached the dropping zone the danger of collision became very real. The Halifax rocked dangerously in the slipstream of machines in front, and perspiration trickled down the pilot's face as he tried to keep the tug in level flight while the glider was preparing to cast off. . . . "Two miles to go," the pilot shouted. "O.K., tug," came the reply. "Can you take us a little lower?"

The nose of the Halifax dipped down slightly. Then we heard the voice of the glider pilot again. "Hello, tug, I am casting off now." "Cheerio, old man. Good luck. See you again soon." The Halifax gave a bound forward as it was relieved of the load of the glider. The Horsa started to dive steeply away to the right, and we turned upwards and to port, climbing swiftly to get out of the tangled stream of gliders and tugs. . . . We were over the battle area now, and in a few seconds gliders and the ground were lost in a sea of smoke. All that remained were the tugs, with their tow-ropes dangling behind them.

Occasionally one could see the flash of a gun. . . . The contending ground forces now had the stage to themselves, for in the smoke and dust of battle the air forces could not intervene further. As we turned for home a few puffs of Flak appeared. . . . A Halifax in front had one wheel of its undercarriage hanging down; . . . obscured by smoke a Hamilcar glider had force-landed in the corner of a field. Ant-like figures were busily engaged in unloading a gun and light tank.

For half an hour after we had started back the unbroken stream of tugs, gliders, and parachute-troop-transports still flowed eastwards.



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. . . The clock-like precision with which the great airborne assault was carried through was the reward of long and careful planning. Several days earlier parachute troops and glider pilots were transferred to transit camps near the airfields from which they would set out. The camps and airfields were "sealed," nobody being allowed in or out. Twenty-four hours before the first take-off time the gliders were loaded up and marshalled at the downwind end of the runway, their tow-ropes attached to their tugs.

That evening, while the crews were having their final briefing, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for Air, and ACM Sir Arthur Tedder, arrived to bring the good wishes of the Prime Minister and General Eisenhower. Air Marshal Tedder told them: "Your operation is the opening of the last round," and the Air Minister expressed his confidence that the result of the assault would be as great as that achieved in Normandy and "as great in heroic spirit as is the never-to-be-forgotten epic of Arnhem."

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *29 March 1945 (D-plus-296).* Initial losses in Operation VARSITY were light. Of the landing force of 4,978 British troops and 9,387 U.S. troops, the following figures were reported:

| *17th Division* (as of 27 Mar.) | | *6th British Division* (as of 26 Mar.) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Killed: | 223 | Killed: | 238 |
| Wounded: | 695 | Wounded: | 736 |
| Missing: | 666 | Missing: | 370 |
| Total: | 1584 | Total: | 1344 |

The 17th and Guards Armored advanced 17 miles and captured Haltern and Dülmen, and the 6th took Lembeck.

REIMS, *30 March 1945 (D-plus-297).* SHAEF directed us to start planning for airborne operations, in small parties, to guard prisoner-of-war camps in about 30 locations.

General Dempsey wrote Ridgway a note praising him for his part in VARSITY, saying: "Your magnificent success in the



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battle itself will live forever as an example of the way in which Airborne forces should be handled."

I agree heartily. Ridgway contributed much to the brilliant achievement of our most successful airborne operation.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *1 April 1945 (D-plus-299).* The Battle of Germany is going strong. During the last week of March we crossed the Rhine in strength wherever we chose. With bridges out, we threw up Treadway and Bailey bridges, used assault boats and every type of craft available. The airborne operation at Wesel unhinged the whole northern front, causing the enemy to pull out on the left flank of the British Second Army. General Hodges's First Army broke out of the Remagen bridgehead. General Patton's Third Army crossed the Rhine at Mainz. General Patch's Seventh Army crossed over between Mannheim and Gernsheim, and the French First Army went across near Germersheim.

Except in isolated cases the Germans' answer to the invasion of their homeland was only feeble resistance. Except for SS and fanatical Nazis they surrendered quickly. We bagged over 350,000 prisoners in Munich. For the first time in 140 years, since Napoleon's time, hostile armies are operating east of the Rhine. The Luftwaffe could do nothing to stop the rout. They have been bombed out of their best airfields in the north and forced to evacuate the Frankfurt bases in the south.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *2 April 1945 (D-plus-300).* SHAEF also directed that airborne operations to protect prisoners-of-war will take precedence over Operation ECLIPSE, the Berlin show. Code name Operation JUBILANT is assigned for the PW job.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *3 April 1945 (D-plus-301).* The pincers around the Ruhr was closed two days ago and upwards of 150,000 to 200,000 German soldiers from possibly as many as 20 different divisions are trapped. The Fifteenth



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Army is holding the base of the trap on the west bank of the Rhine, and the Ninth and First armies closed the jaws when they linked up in the Paderborn area day before yesterday. General Ridgway's XVIII Corps (Airborne) was shifted to General Bradley's 12th Army Group on 1 April. The complete breakdown of the enemy's transport system as a result of our punishing air attacks and the disintegration of the Luftwaffe leaves the Germans trapped in the Ruhr pocket.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *4 April 1945 (D-plus-302).* The speed with which our armies are cutting Germany to pieces is putting our Airborne Army out of business. The 13th Airborne Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Eldridge G. Chapman, Jr., which has been in the marshaling area for over a week, is still standing by. Its original mission, Operation CHOKER II, an airborne operation to assist the Seventh Army in crossing the Rhine, was scrubbed. They are now preparing to execute Operation EFFECTIVE, designed to secure an airhead in front of General Patch's Seventh Army in the vicinity of Bisingen with the ultimate objective of enveloping the Black Forest area.

I had luncheon at the Ritz Hotel in Paris with General Arnold, who has just arrived in the Theater, and General Williams. I gave General Arnold the latest information on airborne operations and told him why Operation ARENA, our grand-scale airborne show, was cancelled. General Arnold said that he and General Marshall both felt that proper strategic airborne planning had not been done in Europe—through no fault of ours, however.

Gratified at the news that my C/S, Floyd L. Parks, has been promoted to the rank of Major General. He has done a magnificent job and deserves it. His training as Aide under two Chiefs of Staff, General Marshall and General Malin Craig, undoubtedly helped him develop his flawless way of handling staff work and getting the most from conflicting personalities. General Parks also has served directly under General Eisenhower and General Patton and is an expert



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on armored warfare. His experience with us has given him a good grasp on air operations.

REIMS, *5 April 1945 (D-plus-303).* General Eisenhower is greatly interested in our air resupply to the advancing armies, and I informed General Bull that we had broken all records yesterday when the Troop Carrier Command transported 3,556 tons, including 732,100 gallons of gas, east of the Rhine. This figure exceeds the total of 727,667 gallons the C-47s hauled from January through 31 March.

LONDON, *7 April 1945 (D-plus-305).* I have a favorable report from the British Airborne Corps of the SAS activities behind the enemy's lines in Holland. The first reconnaissance party was dropped three nights ago northwest of Apeldoorn and immediately contacted local Resistance parties. A Belgian SAS regiment and a French SAS battalion are ready to be dropped in front of the Canadian Corps when they launch their attack.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *8 April 1945 (D-plus-306).* I have a letter from Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, which is a tribute to the teamwork of the joint Anglo-American staff of the First Allied Airborne Army. Our headquarters, the only joint British-American combat command, certainly answers the question whether we live and work together. Sir Alan's letter follows:

WAR OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON, S.W. 1

My dear Brereton,

Major-General Gale has just been to see me and has given me an account of the recent successful airborne operations carried out under your direction by the XVIIIth U.S. Corps with the 6th British and 17th U.S. Divisions under command. I had the pleasure of witnessing this force go into action from a viewpoint on



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the west of the Rhine, and it was a most impressive and inspiring spectacle.

I should like to congratulate you most heartily on the great results achieved by what has been perhaps the most successful airborne operation carried out up to now. At the same time I should like to take the opportunity of thanking you for all you have done for British airborne troops since the formation of the First Allied Airborne Army. I realize that our contribution has necessarily been limited in quantity, and that owing to our inability to provide trained reinforcements rapidly for the 1st. Airborne Division, we have latterly been able to put only one division at your disposal. Nevertheless I know that you have invariably given full support, encouragement and credit to our airborne commanders and troops. The leadership which you have exercised with such sympathy and understanding has resulted in a most happy fusion of the airborne forces of our two nations, and has made them into one team in a manner which must be very nearly unique in military history.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) A. BROOKE

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *9 April 1945 (D-plus-307).* Contacted SHAEF, requesting energetic measures be taken to counteract a story in the *London Daily Telegraph* referring to the SAS troops dropped in the Canadian sector as "saboteurs." These men are in full uniform carrying out assigned military operations behind the enemy's lines, and, if captured, are entitled to the same privileges as any other prisoners-of-war. "Saboteurs" get shot.

FLIGHT EAST OF THE RHINE, *10 April 1945 (D-plus-308).* Took off from A-42 at 1430 hours and flew east across the Rhine to Wiesbaden and Mainz. Both cities were almost completely in ruins. Flew over Frankfurt and found it to be in the same condition. Flew over Y-67 and saw about 25 C-47s which had delivered gas. Flew north to Y-96, which is south of Kassel, and circled the field, on which there were about 50 C-47s which had already delivered gas. This is only



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about four miles behind the front line. Circled the city of Kassel, which is completely devastated. Then flew to the southwest towards Coblenz, which is virtually leveled. The air was filled with C-47s from the Troop Carrier Command carrying gas and rations to the advancing armies. It was a great sight.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *11 April 1945 (D-plus-309).* Colonel Nolan reported that the 194th Glider Infantry had captured Franz von Papen, Nazi diplomat. The 17th got a tip that led to von Papen's capture from an English-speaking German rescued from a bomb shelter after an air attack in the village of Stockhausen. He told them about the diplomat's son, Captain von Papen, who was first taken. The next day a patrol went to von Papen's hiding place, a lodge in the hills. They were met by a character who turned out to be Max von Stockhausen, the diplomat's son-in-law and bodyguard. His efforts to discourage them met with failure. When the GIs entered the lodge, von Papen was eating.

"I do not know what you want with an old man of sixty-seven," said von Papen. "I wish the war was over."

"So do eleven million other guys!" snapped a GI. "Let's go, von Papen!"

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *12 April 1945 (D-plus-310).* One of the outstanding air resupply jobs of the war took place on 9–10 April, when the Troop Carrier Command flew in badly needed gasoline, ammunition, and rations to the 10th Armored division at Crailsheim, 50 miles south of Würzburg. The 10th Armored, which broke through from the northwest a week ago, reached out too far and was pinched off. The first attempt to supply them resulted in the destruction of 22 trucks. The airfield was under heavy mortar, artillery, and Nebelwerfer fire, and enemy infantry was only 1,500 yards away. 34 C-47s flew through heavy flak to land with a cargo of 160,160 pounds of gasoline in jerricans, 37,865 pounds of ammunition, and 5,400 pounds of K-rations. While on the



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airfield one plane was destroyed and four others received major battle damage. The next day C-47s flew 31,800 pounds of .50-caliber ammunition, 31,590 pounds of 105-mm. shells, and 21,600 pounds of K-rations. As a result of these two missions the 10th Armored was able to fight its way out of the pocket and joined the main body of American troops.[15]

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *13 April 1945 (D-plus-311).* The sad news of President Roosevelt's death yesterday has spread gloom among Americans, British, Frenchmen, and all Allied nationalities. It is regrettable that he couldn't have lived to see the downfall of Germany, which can come any moment now.[16]

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *14 April 1945 (D-plus-312).* The German Air Force is completely disorganized. Its few remaining bases, which are under constant air attack, are so congested that it is not likely to operate again as an integrated force. Any distinction between tactical and strategic forces is now meaningless.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *17 April 1945 (D-plus-315).* General Ridgway told General Parks he was in process of negotiating with Field Marshal Model for his surrender. He had sent Model the terms of surrender, stating that if he would agree he would make a show of force in order to give him an

[15] LATER: Maj. Gen. Edward H. Brooks of the VI Corps and Gen. Alexander M. Patch of the 7th Army sent tributes to the Troop Carrier Command. General Brooks said: "I consider the supply of Crailsheim by the C-47s to have been the outstanding event in the history of air-ground coöperation. With such support armor can operate in an even more aggressive and daring role than heretofore."

[16] LATER: Our former Deputy C/S Brigadier Goldsmith, now convalescing from an operation, wrote me: "I think England felt the news of the President's death almost as much as America did. As Mr. Churchill said, he was the best American friend England has ever had."



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excuse for surrendering. If he did not choose to do this, Ridgway would attack and capture him dead or alive. Model had sent a Colonel of the Staff back to Ridgway's headquarters stating that he could not surrender because he had sworn allegiance to Hitler and given his promise that he would not surrender the troops. General Ridgway sent word back that if Model did not surrender he would attack and capture him.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *18 April 1945 (D-plus-316).* General Ridgway reported at 0645 that all resistance in the Ruhr pocket had ceased, completing the largest double envelopment in military history. The XVIIIth Corps alone took 160,892 prisoners, while the total bag ran over 300,000. (Final figures: 316,930.) Although Field Marshal Model got away by air, the XVIIIth Corps captured 25 General officers. The 17th Division took Maj. Gen. Josef Harpe, commander of the Ninth Panzer army. An estimated 200,000 displaced persons were liberated and 5,639 Allied prisoners-of-war were freed. The Ruhr operation took 18 days.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *19 April 1945 (D-plus-317).* Enemy airfield congestion is now worse than ever, and enormous claims are made by Allied fighters whenever they go on ground-strafing missions. Though only a small minority of the aircraft so destroyed may belong to first-line operational units, the devastating effect of constant low-level attacks on airfield installations and quarters has reduced GAF efficiency to nothing. After attacks on airfields the enemy is sparing no effort by night or day to get them into working order again. He is trying hard to keep some sort of air force in being to bolster up the defense of the North German ports and of the southern line.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *24 April 1945 (D-plus-322).* The British War Office is considering an assault on Norway with airborne forces and the possible use of ground forces across the border from Sweden. Pressure is being brought to bear



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on the Swedes to allow us to pass through their territory. Cities under consideration for the airborne operation are Oslo, Stavanger, and Christiansen.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *25 April 1945 (D-plus-323)*. Junction with the Russians was made today at Torgau, when patrols of the First Army and Field Marshal Konev's First Ukrainian Army linked up. Second Lieut. William D. Robertson, heading a four-man patrol from General Parks's old division, the 69th, met a Russian private halfway across the bridge over the Elbe.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *26 April 1945 (D-plus-324)*. Brigadier Flavell's son, Lieut. James Flavell, a member of the British 1st Airborne Division who was wounded and captured at Arnhem, has been liberated from Oflag 79, north of Brunswick. Lieutenant Flavell, only 19, fought on the Arnhem bridge for three days. He told me that the Germans never would have taken them if they hadn't run out of ammunition and medical supplies. After he was captured he was loaded in a truck with 28 others. Going through a village, two of the officers jumped off the back of the truck and escaped. Instead of trying to catch the escapees the German guards emptied their machine pistols into the truck. They killed five men and wounded many. Lieutenant Flavell, at the back of the truck, wasn't hit. The guards ordered all the men off the truck and stood them against the wall with their hands over their heads. They were preparing to shoot them all when two German officers came by and stopped them. They were loaded back on the truck and taken to a PW camp.

PARIS, *29 April 1945 (D-plus-327)*. The papers today are filled with reports of Himmler's surrender offer to England and the United States, excluding Russia. Himmler supposedly told his go-between that Hitler will be dead in Berlin in 24 hours. General Dietmar, the captured German mili-



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tary commentator, is quoted as saying: "I am absolutely convinced that Hitler's death will be followed by the total collapse of resistance within a very few days. Hitler's death in Berlin will be a very good thing. It will hasten the end of the war."

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *30 April 1945 (D-plus-328)*.. The German armies have disintegrated rapidly during the last part of April. General Patton's tanks ran wild, reaching Czechoslovakia and Austria. The Seventh Army, after a hard battle at Nürnberg, spread out over Bavaria. In the north the British Second Army two days ago reached the Elbe River, only 65 miles from Berlin. The XVIII Corps (Airborne), its Ruhr job finished, moved up to augment the British force, and the 82nd A/B Division led the attack across the Elbe at Bleckede.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *1 May 1945 (D-plus-329)*. In the drive from the Rhine to the Elbe, into Czechoslovakia and Austria and across Germany, the Troop Carrier Command, with its 1500 C-47s each carrying a 2½-ton load, kept an air supply line open. The Troop Carriers made the nearest airfield the supply base of the armored columns. During April, the Troop Carrier planes, operating on 240 airfields from Cherbourg to Leipzig, flew 20,959 resupply sorties and delivered 59,396.5 tons of freight, including 10,255,509 gallons of gasoline. After dumping their supplies the Troop Carriers evacuated wounded from hospitals. During April they evacuated 46,313 patients, getting them to hospitals quickly where prompt medical care saved many lives. The C-47s also were used to evacuate Allied liberated prisoners of war.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *2 May 1945 (D-plus-330)*. The British 6th Airborne Division reached Wismar on the Baltic two hours ahead of the Russians. With the approach of the Russians the Germans, bewildered and lost without leaders,



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were surrendering to the British and Americans by the thousands. They wanted no part of the Russians.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *4 May 1945 (D-plus-332).* SHAEF inquired if we could drop an airborne regiment in Copenhagen tomorrow. We replied "Yes." Informed by SHAEF that negotiations are in progress with Admiral Dönitz for capitulation. The 13th Airborne Division is in the marshaling yard ready to go, and General Williams will set up the long-range C-46s to do the job. Later advice from SHAEF reported that the Germans had capitulated in northwestern Germany, Holland, and Denmark.

LONDON, *5 May 1945 (D-plus-333).* General Eisenhower last night issued the following statement:

German forces on the Western Front have disintegrated today. What is left of two German armies surrendered to a single American division—the 102nd—commanded by Maj. Gen. Frank A. Keating. In northwestern Germany, Holland, Denmark, and the Frisian Islands all troops surrendered to Field Marshal Montgomery. In the south, Allied troops from General Devers's command and from Italy have joined. On the Czech border a Panzer division gave up unconditionally to General Bradley's forces. They know they are beaten. Any further losses will be due either to their own stupidity or to that of the German Government. On land, sea, and in the air the Germans are thoroughly whipped, and their only recourse is to surrender.

That tells the story. It's all over but the official surrender, and the "Cease Fire" is expected hourly.

MAISONS LAFFITTE, *6 May 1945 (D-plus-334).* Informed definitely I would command the American and British sector of Berlin, and SHAEF has approved taking the Hqs. FAAA for the job.

HAGENAU, GERMANY, *7 May 1945 (D-plus-335).* Flew here to Hqs. of General Ridgway's XVIII Corps and enroute



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got another aerial view of the utter devastation of the industrial cities in Germany. They are as bad as the cities in the Ruhr. Flew over the area to inspect PW camps and repatriate camps. The total number of them in the area of the XVIII Corps is well over 400,000. The repatriate camps seem to be orderly and well kept, but the DP (displaced person) camps were in great confusion. They lack food. Many of the DPs are Russian slave laborers of whom a large portion are very unwilling to return to Russia; while some are not actually slave labor, but were induced by the promise of high wages to leave Russia for work in Germany.

There was a mass burial at which some 300 DPs who had died in the past two days at the camp were buried. The graves were dug by the German civilians, including all the officials from the mayor on down. The whole population of the town was forced to witness the formal ceremony. A very strong address was given to them by G-5, stating the disgust of the civilized world at a people who would permit such conditions and telling them that the responsibility was squarely on their own shoulders and that it would take a long time for their conduct and attitude to convince the world that they were fit to be considered on a par with civilized nations.

HAGENOW, GERMANY, *8 May 1945 (D-plus-336).* Today I decorated Ridgway. He received the DSM, Silver Star, and Bronze Star for his gallantry in action in Italy and Normandy and across the Rhine.

Flew to the 17th Airborne Division's Hqs. at Essen. With General Miley inspected the Ruhr area and was greatly impressed by the complete and total ruin of all industrial installations, particularly the Krupp and Thyssen works.

Members of the G-2 section of the 17th told me that Alfred Krupp von Bohlen, chief of the Krupp Works, Germany's vast war-making industrial empire, is under house arrest at his country estate near by. He moved out of the Krupp castle, where he once was tended by 125 servants.



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Krupp von Bohlen told interrogating officers that the production capacity of the Krupp plants when the Americans overran the territory was exactly zero. He said that the stoppage was caused by the failure of water-supply system as a result of the Allied bombings. They had plenty of coal, he said, and, despite the terrific amount of destruction to the plants, could have continued to operate on a reduced scale but for the lack of water needed to generate steam for the generators. He told American officers he hoped the Allies would repair the water-supply system and allow the Krupp Works to begin producing locomotives, railway tracks, bridges, and other steel products.

Enroute back to Paris we heard by radio that the Prime Minister had broadcast the official termination of hostilities. The unconditional surrender was signed yesterday at Reims.

THE END



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# INDEX

*An Index of Persons will be found on pages 443-50.*


A-2, 307
A-20s, 4, 138, 250, 280, 311
A-24s, 56, 74, 85
Aachen (Germany), 340, 372
Aachen-Maastricht Gap, 336
Aalst (Holland), 349
Abadan (Iran), 180
Abancourt (France), 280
ABDACOM, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 83, 84, 105; term defined, 76; area, 97-98; dissolved, 98-99
Adriatic Sea, 198, 206
Africa Air Transport, 167
Afrika Korps, 136-87; retreat from Egypt begun, 152, 155; defeat at El Alamein, 159-67; out of Egypt, 167; losses at Tobruk, 166, 168; at El Agheila, 173; at Mareth Line, 178, 181-84; final defeat, 186, 189; casualties, prisoners, losses, 187; tank strength, 150, 168; plane strength, 160, 168; fuel and other supplies, 144, 149, 151, 156, 159, 165 n., 167, 168, 174, 183; shipping, 156, 165 n., 174; morale, 163; knowledge about Middle East Air Force, 161 n.; communications, 149
Air Combat Control Squadron, 279
Air Corps Maintenance Command, 5
Air Defense Command, 218
Air Defense of Great Britain, 223, 358
air force training areas, 3-4, 216
air and ground forces, coöperation between, 142-43, 157-58, 182, 230, 233, 299, 305, 308, 319-20, 324 n.
Air Service Command, 168, 216, 217, 218, 222, 259, 267
air superiority in N. Africa, 159-60, 165 n., 173
Air Transport Command, *see* Assam-Burma-China ferry *and* Troop Carrier Command
Air Warning Service, 6, 9, 22, 40, 42, 65, 67, 86
airborne operations preliminary to invasion of N. W. Europe, 260, 262-63, 267, 276-79
Airborne Training Center (Maxton, N.C.), 215
airborne troops, 216, 223; command of, 228, 366, 392; Franklin on, 330; proper employment of, 333, 339, 341, 342, 366, 367-68, 372, 390-92, 414-15 (*see also* units by designation)
Ajedabia, 172
Akarit (N. Africa), 183-84
Albert Canal (Belgium), 342, 343
Aldermaston (England), 231
Alexandria (Egypt), 144, 148, 154, 159
Algiers, 171, 173, 188
Allied Expeditionary Air Force (Ninth Air Force and Second TAF), 220, 223, 224, 226, 229, 231, 232, 237, 250, 252, 253, 254, 259, 264, 265, 270, 274, 301, 325; total planes for invasion, 261; Advance Hqrs., 264, 265, 273, 341; scheme of maneuver decided on, 271-73; softening-up operations, 298
Allied expeditionary forces' landing in N. Africa, 167
Allied superiority in N. Africa—air, 159-60, 165 n., 173; artillery, 162
Amboina, 100, 102
American Ferry to Australia, 29
American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers), *see* 23rd Fighter Group
Americans' relations with the British, 188-89, 221, 226, 227, 230, 311 (For other "American" entries, *see* U.S.)
Amiens (France), 280, 337
amphibious landings, 249, 255, 257, 261, 262 (*see also* Exercises BEAVER, THUNDERCLAP, *and* EAGLE, *and* Operation OVERLORD)
Amsterdam-Schipol (Holland), 225, 229





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*Ancon*, 279
Andaman Islands, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119
antiaircraft defenses, 14, 22, 60, 67, 86, 228, 229, 267, 268, 288, 405
antitank guns, 164, 165 n.
Antwerp (Belgium), 340
Aparri (P. I.), 45-49, 52, 59
Apeldoorn (Holland), 417
Arabs in Cairo, 139
Ardennes, Battle of the, 374-95; casualties, 392
Arendas Island, 87
Argentan (France), 280, 332, 333, 334
Army-Navy game, 34
Arnhem (Holland), 340, 343, 345, 346, 349, 350, 353-56, 358-59, 360-61, 362-65, 371, 373, 422
Asansol (India), 105, 115, 116-18
Ascot (England), 217 ff.
Ashdon (England), 311
Assam, 109, 121, 122, 126
Assam-Burma-China ferry, 109-10, 115, 123, 124-25, 126
assassination of high-ranking Allied officers, plan for, 376
*Augusta*, 260-61, 262
Augusta (Sicily), 187
Auray-Hennepont (France), 368
Aure River, 281
Australia, 9, 24, 25-26, 28-30, 57, 71-76, 79, 80-83, 102; defense of, 75, 79; labor troubles in, 80
Australian forces in N. Africa, 160, 162, 163
Australian Government, 75, 79, 80, 81
Austria, 197, 205-206, 423
Auxerre (France), 398
Avranches (France), 319, 322, 323, 329, 330
Axis—propaganda in India, 123; espionage in Africa, 154; armies in Africa, *see* Afrika Korps *and* Italians in N. Africa; armies in Russia, 147, 158; High Command, 149; shipping, 166, 167; in Sicily, 194

B-18s, 22, 56, 86
B-17s, (Flying Fortresses), 4, 6, 14, 15, 22, 32, 35-36, 38, 39-40, 41, 43-44, 45, 51, 54, 55, 58, 59, 61, 72, 74, 76, 79, 84, 85, 86, 87, 109, 127, 155, 157, 166, 194, 195, 237, 240, 246, 251, 313, 314, 315, 345, 390
B-17Es, 155
B-10s, 23
B-25s, 109, 119, 128, 141, 144, 148, 160, 161, 162
B-24s (Liberators), 84, 140, 141, 172, 174, 175, 186, 187, 192, 194-95, 196, 198-99, 200, 201, 206, 207, 237, 240, 251, 310, 313, 314, 315, 348, 406
B-26s (Marauders), 194, 218, 219, 220, 222, 224-25, 230, 232, 233, 237, 238, 240, 245, 250, 251, 253, 255, 257, 259, 260, 261, 262, 280, 298, 304, 315
bacteriological warfare, 244
Baguio (P. I.), 40
Bahrein (Iran), 135
Bailey bridges, 415
Balikpapan (Borneo), 72, 85, 86, 87
Baltimores, 146, 182
Bandoeng (Java), 86, 90-92, 99
Bargiel depression (Libya), 151
Bari (Italy) airdrome, 186
Barksdale Field (La.), 115, 118, 190
Barling Bomber, 157
Basra (Iraq), 135, 140, 179-80
Bastille Day (1944), 307
Bastogne (Belgium), 376-93, 401-402
Bataan Peninsula (P. I.), 53, 60
Batavia (Java), 77-79
Batchelor Field (Australia), 25, 26, 58, 60, 61 n., 72, 80
Bathurst Island, 82 n.
Battle of Britain, 8, 142, 244, 259
Battle of the Bulge, *see* Ardennes
Battle of Egypt, 135-52
Battle of Jutland, 157
Bavaria, 423
Bay of Bengal, 108, 117
Bayeux (France), 275, 276
beach defenses (Normandy), attacks on, 229, 249, 262; wire and mine, 229, 279; poles, 278-79 n.
Beach OMAHA, 262, 275, 276, 279, 281, 282, 284
Beach UTAH, 275, 276, 279, 280, 283, 284, 287
beaches, buildup of, 281-82, 283-84, 286
Beaulieu (England), 253
Beek (Holland), 356
Beirut (Syria), 145
Belgian resistance, 417
Bengal, 111
Benghazi (Libya), 139, 141, 144, 149, 154, 155, 167, 168, 170, 180, 181, 189, 190, 192-93, 194, 195-96, 197-202, 207-208
Benina landing field (N. Africa), 200



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Berkshire Country Club (England), 226-27, 230
Berlin, 234, 240, 246, 247, 248, 250, 251, 254, 289, 290, 370, 373, 395, 398, 423; airfields, 340, 370, 373; plans for initial occupation of, 396; American and British sector of, 424
Berlin, Irving, *This Is the Army*, 223
Berok-sur-Mer (France), 225
Bir Dufan airfield (N. Africa), 176
*Birmingham Belle*, 276-77
Bizerte (Tunisia), 173, 186
Black Forest (Germany), 416
"Black Scorpions," 179
"Black Widows," 261
Bleckede (Germany), 423
Blenheims, 85
*Blessed Event* (Liberator), 207
Boer War, 99
Bombay (India), 109, 110
bomber crews and commanders, 216-17; morale, 178, 245, 246; length of time of combat duty, 246
bombers, 6-8, 9, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29, 40, 41, 65, 66, 67, 109, 114, 126, 156, 165, 176-77; classes, 8, 22; fighter cover for, 143; role in invasion of N. W. Europe, 271-72; proper use of, 297-98, 317 (*see also above*, B-18s, etc.)
bombing—dive, 74, 265, 266; radar-controlled dive, 309-10; glide, 265; skip, 265-66; buzz, 299, 304
bombing technique and procedure, changes in, 250, 266
bombing of towns for road blocks, 297-98, 299
Boran (Belgium), 393
Bordeaux (France), 287
Borneo, 72, 76, 100, 102
Bostons, 146, 238, 258
Boulogne (France), 334
Bourcy (Belgium), 393
Boxted (England), 224 ff.
Bréhal (France), 319
Bremen (Germany), 229, 264
Bren guns, 115
Brest peninsula (France), 268, 324
Brewsters, 85
Bricquebec (France), 289, 297, 302
Brisbane (Australia), 29, 73-75, 81-83
British Admiralty, 274 n.
British air force in S. W. Pacific, 85
British Air Ministry, 217, 224, 226, 227, 274 n., 287, 335
British Airborne Corps, 309, 323, 342, 365, 373, 417
British Airborne Divisions, 267 (*see also* British 1st and 6th A/B Divisions)
British-American relations, 188-89, 221, 226, 227, 230, 311
British Eighth Army, 130-93; plan in case of defeat in Egypt, 139-40; in defeat of Axis at El Alamein, 159-67; occupies Tobruk, 168; strategy in pursuit of Germans, 168-69; occupies Benghazi, 170; takes Tripoli, 176-77; at Mareth Line, 181, 182; at Akarit, 183; victorious over Axis forces, 186-87; GHQ, 137, 159; command, 179; supplies, 169-70, 172, 173; in Sicily invasion, 193
British VIII Corps, 404
British 50th Division, 276
British 1st Airborne Division ("Red Devils"), 308, 324, 343, 346, 349, 350-51 n., 399, 418, 422; at Arnhem, 353-58, 360, 391
British 1st Armored Division, 163, 166
British Ministry of Economic Warfare, 191, 194
British Navy, 149, 187, 243, 257
British Ninth Army, 140
British Second Army, 249, 275, 276, 307, 310, 342, 343, 354, 360, 387, 396, 405, 415, 423
British Second Tactical Air Force, 220, 223, 227, 237, 240, 241, 255, 258, 259, 298, 301, 334, 358, 390, 403, 405, 406
British Secret Service, 119
British 17th Division, 107
British 7th Armored Division, 150, 162, 166, 177
British 6th Airborne Division, 276, 279, 282, 308, 373, 376, 389, 390, 391, 395, 399, 405, 406, 407, 408, 417, 423; VARSITY casualties, 414
British 10th Armored Division, 163, 165
British Tenth Army, 140
British Tenth Corps, 138, 161
British XXX Corps, 342, 355, 366, 404
British XII Corps, 366, 405
British War Office, 359 n., 421
Brittany, 275, 323, 368
Bronte (Sicily), 207
Brunswick (Germany), 234, 237, 257, 392, 422
Brussels (Belgium), 340, 348, 349, 397, 403-407



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Bu Ngum (N. Africa), 176, 177
Bucharest (Rumania), 200
Buerat (Libya), 175, 176, 177
bulldozers, 298
Burma, 106-31; attack on, 111-12; defense of, 113, 119; loss of, 120, 121; retreat from, 121-23, 125, 135; subsequent situation, 144; Air Commando operations in, 365
Burma Road, 14-15, 108, 109, 113, 124

C-47s (Carriers), 167, 169, 172, 177, 193, 251, 262, 263, 276, 309, 335, 355, 383, 386, 388, 389, 418, 419, 420, 423
Caen (France), 275, 276, 280, 282, 287, 304, 305, 310, 322
Cagayen (P. I.), 54
Cairo (Egypt), 135-37, 139-49, 155-60, 166-70, 172-79, 182-84, 186-91, 194-98, 203-10
Calcutta (India), 105, 106, 111, 114, 124-25, 127
*Caliban* (Liberator), 207
Cambrai (France), 225
Canisy (France), 317, 320
Cape Bon (Tunisia), 184-85, 189, 210
Carentan (France), 275, 280, 284, 285, 293, 307
Casablanca conference, 177
Catalinas, 34, 63, 78, 85
Catanduanes (P. I.), 44
Catania (Sicily), 187, 193, 207
Caucasus, 147, 149
Cavite Naval Station (P. I.), 43, 46, 63
Cebu (P. I.), 32, 35, 49, 51
Celebes, 100, 102
Ceylon, 99, 105, 118
CG-4As (Gliders), 252, 260, 277, 278, 396
CG-13As (Gliders), 396
Chantilly (France), 365
chaplains, 399
Charleroi-Montignies (Belgium), 255, 262
Chartres (France), 245
Château-Thierry (France), 337
Chekiang Province (China), 109
Chequers (England), 249
Cherbourg (France), 225, 227, 275, 284, 289-91, 296-97, 299-300
Chièvres (Belgium), 225
China, 9, 10, 24, 31, 106-107, 127, 129-30; air support to, 125-26, 128; air transport from India to, *see* Assam-Burma-China ferry
China Air Task Force, 126
Chindwin River, 107, 128
Chinese in Burma campaign, 107-108, 112, 119, 121
Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies, 106, 108, 112
Christchurch field (England), 253
Chuchow (China), 113
Chungking (China), 15, 73, 105, 108, 109, 123, 125, 126, 129-30
Churgia (N. Africa), 177
CIO, 82
citation of 101st Airborne Division, 401-402
Clark Field (P. I.), 9, 21, 22, 23, 30, 36-40, 46-52, 55, 65; prewar condition, 32-33, 35, 36; attacked, 41-43; condition after attack, 57
Coblenz (Germany), 268, 269, 340, 419
Colmar (France), 395
Cologne (Germany), 246, 340, 398
Colombo (Ceylon), 100, 105, 114, 118
"combat alert" defined, 38 n.
Combined Operations and Intelligence Center (S. W. Pacific), 78, 101
Comiso (Sicily), 193
Commandos, 404, 406, 407; raids, 154, 190, 220
communications, 36, 43, 49-50, 64, 65, 75, 76, 154, 160
Conches (France), 247
Congressional Medal of Honor, 207-208, 208-209, 234 n., 285 n.
Constantine (Algeria), 184
Constanza (Rumania), 141
coördination of air and ground forces, 142-43, 157-58, 182, 230, 233, 299, 305, 308, 319-20, 324 n.
Copenhagen (Denmark), 424
Corregidor (P. I.), 18, 22, 60, 82, 83
COSSAC (Chiefs of Staff Supreme Allied Commander), 228, 236
Cotentin Peninsula (France), 243, 275, 276, 292, 306, 323
Coutances (France), 310, 317, 318, 320
Crailsheim (Germany), 419-20
Craon (France), 305
Creil (France), 255, 258
Crete, 149, 160, 161, 169, 175, 210
Criqueville (France), 286
Crotone (Italy), 183
Cyprus, 142
Cyrenaica, 99, 172
Czechoslovakia, 423

Dartmouth (England), 255
Darwin (Australia), 15 n., 25-26, 28, 29, 55, 61, 71, 72, 73, 80



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Davao (P. I.), 59, 60, 61 n.; our attacks at, 76, 78
DC-3s, 105, 122
D-day (invasion of N. W. Europe), 233, 272, 273, 274, 275-80
D-minus-1 day, 272
D-plus-1, 233, 281
D-plus-2, 281-82
D-plus-4, casualties up to, 285 n.
*Debonair Duke* (C-47), 300
Del Carmen Field (P. I.), 22, 36, 40, 41, 42, 46
Del Monte Field (P. I.), 9, 21, 32, 35-36, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 51, 53-54, 55, 59, 60, 65
Del Monte plantations (P. I.), 32
Den Passar (Bali), 87, 97
Démouville (France), 310
desert, the, as a battleground, 173
Desert Air Task Force, 184
desert warfare, technique of, 142-43
Deuve River, 285
Dieppe (France), 269, 337; raid, 190, 220
*Ding Hao,* 234 n.
Dinjan (India), 123, 124-25, 127, 128
distance records by bombers and fighters, 254, 264
Distinguished Flying Cross, 93, 189, 236
Distinguished Service Cross, 54 n., 57 n., 58 n., 93, 169, 209-10, 223, 359 n.
Distinguished Service Medal, 425
Distinguished Service Order, 368
Djogjakarta (Java), 97
Dodecanese Islands, 160
Domfront (France), 330
*Don Isidro,* 81-82
*Dorchester,* 118
Dornier 217s, 228-29
Dorter Rott (Germany), 407
Douai (France), 262
Douglas Aircraft Co., 140-41
Doullens (France), 336
DP camps in Germany, 425
Driel (Holland), 354
Dülmen (Germany), 414
Dunkirk (France), 135
Düsseldorf (Germany), 246
Dutch Air Force, 85
Dutch ground forces, 101
Dutch resistance, 417

Eagle Squadrons (RAF), 224
Earl's Colne (England), 228 ff.
East Indies, *see* Netherlands East Indies
Ecouche (France), 280
Eglin Field (Fla.), 57-58 n.
Egypt, 135-49; ending of threat to, 152
874th Battalion Aviation Engineers, 324
XVIII Corps (Airborne), 349, 374-75, 379, 393, 396, 399, 405, 416, 417, 421, 423, 424-25
18th Pursuit Squadron, 40
VIII Corps, 287, 376, 394, 398
Eighth Corps Area, 165
8th Pursuit Group, 84
84th Division, 399
84th Fighter Wing, 253
82nd Airborne Division, 192, 223, 236, 263, 267, 276, 278, 279, 308, 337, 367, 370, 371, 375-76, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 399, 423; in Operation MARKET, 343-58, 363; Ardennes casualties, 392
83rd Division, 321
Eindhoven (Holland), 343, 344, 348, 349-50, 352, 360
El Adem, 172
El Agheila, 166, 168, 173, 174, 176
El Alamein, 136, 137, 138; Battle of, 159-67, 184; tank battle, 163-64; Rommel's tactics at, 181
El Daba, 162, 164
El Djem, 184-86
El Fayif, 140, 146
El Fuka airport, 146
El Fuka escarpment, 166
Elbe River, 422, 423
elephant transport, 111
11th Armored Division, 389, 394
Enfidaville (Tunisia), 186, 187
Engineer Command, 218, 237, 267, 279-80, 399
*Enterprise,* 236
Escaut Canal (Belgium), 343
espionage, enemy, 30, 43, 51, 57, 65, 67, 154, 403
Essen (Germany), 425-26
Etienneville (France), 280
Eureka equipment, 216
Exercises:
BEAVER, 255
EAGLE, 260-61, 263-64
FABIUS, 262-63
PRANK, 248-49
"Exterminators," 179

FAAA, *see* First Allied Airborne Army
Falaise Gap (France), 332, 333, 334, 335, 341, 382
Far East Air Force, 5, 20-23; in the Philippines, 31-67; personnel and equipment in 1941, 20-22; im-



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proved, 23; on war footing, 31-32; in attack on Philippines, 41-49; status after attack, 51, 53; maintenance, 55; strength, 56; lack of planes, 56-57, 58
in Java-Australia, 29, 30 n., 62, 72, 73, 74, 76, 78-79, 83-84
command of, 79
fatigue, operational, 176
*Feeble Eagle* (Mustang), 248
FFI (French Forces of the Interior), 335, 368-69
Fifteenth Air Force, 232, 406
15th Army Group, 193
15th Scottish Infantry, 406
Fifth Air Base Unit, 33
5th Armored Division, 321
fifth-column activities, 51, 101
V Corps, 276, 281, 287, 388
5th Division, 321
50th Fighter Group, 291
51st Fighter Group, 109, 115
51st Highlanders, 163, 184
51st Pursuit Group, 84
52nd Lowlanders, 308, 324, 354
52nd Troop Carrier Wing, 241
57th Fighter Group, 141, 142, 146, 155, 161, 161 n., 162, 166, 169, 170, 173, 174, 176, 179, 184-86, 189, 208
fighter-bomber technique, 143
fighters, 6-8, 22, 29, 36, 40, 44, 67, 109, 126, 143, 182-83; role in invasion of N. W. Europe, 270-71, 272
"Fighting Cocks," 179
*Fighting Falcon* (glider), 277
First Allied Airborne Army, 308-309, 317, 322-23, 330-69, 372, 373, 389-90, 391, 394, 397, 399, 416, 417-18, 424; composition, 308, 389; headquarters, 417
First Australian Corps, 101
1st Division, 276, 313, 321
1st Battalion, 407
1st Polish Paratroop Brigade, 324, 343, 346, 350-51 n., 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 366
1st Regiment, 380
First Ukrainian Army, 422
551st Parachute Infantry, 392
501st Parachute Infantry, 379
509th Parachute Infantry, 392
502nd Parachute Infantry, 349, 379, 385
517th Parachute Infantry, 392
506th Parachute Infantry, 351, 352, 384
513th Parachute Infantry, 360
flak suits, 258
flying bombs, 373 (for Germans' *see* V-1s)
"flying boot," 183
Flying Fortresses, *see* B-17s
Flying Tigers, *see* 23rd Fighter Group
Focke-Wulf 190s, 257; factory, 234
Foggia airdrome (Italy), 207
food in Germany and occupied countries, 401
food served to U. S. soldiers, 146, 222, 360
*Formidable*, 85
Formosa, 34-35, 37, 39, 40, 41, 45, 47, 50
Fort Hertz (Burma), 121
Fort McKinley (P. I.), 52, 63
48th Fighter Group, 257
44th Bomb Group, 90, 192, 199, 201, 208
49th Pursuit Group, 84
43rd Service Group, 208
405th Thunderbolt Group, 253
401st Parachute Infantry, 384
440th Troop Carrier Group, 367
404th Thunderbolt Group, 310
490th QM Depot Co., 389
406th Thunderbolt Group, 310, 311
463rd Artillery Battalion, 385
438th Troop Carrier Group, 262-63, 276-77
14th Bomb Group, 36
4th Armored Division, 321, 388, 389
4th Division, 275-76, 283, 313, 321
4th Dorsetshire Regiment, 356
4th French Battalion, 368
4th Indian Division, 184
Francaville (Sicily), 207
France, invasion of Southern, 333-34
Frankfurt (Germany), 237, 239 n., 245, 246, 415, 418
Free French, 145
French First Army, 415
French resistance, 287-88, 368-69
Fritzlar (Germany), 399

G-2 (Intelligence), 51, 60, 147, 149, 272, 335, 376, 387, 425
G-3 (Plans and Operation), 323, 380, 383
G-4 (Supply), 60, 309 (*see also* supply)
G-5, 425
Gabès (Tunisia), 186
Gambut (N. Africa), 174-75
Gangway (Hqs. Ninth Air Force, England), 217
gas in warfare, 244; false alarms of, 312



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gas tanks, self-sealing, 216
Gazala-Martuba-Derna area (Libya), 170
Gela (Sicily), 193
General Motors, 14-15, 190
Gerbini (Sicily), 193
German Air Ministry, 395
German airfields, destruction of, 421
German demolition work, 306-307
German 15th Panzer Division, 138, 151, 161
German fighter production, 197
German forces in N. Africa, *see* Afrika Korps
German 47th Panzer Corps, 322
German General Staff, 242
German headquarters in Sicily, 193
German High Command, 404
German jet-propelled aircraft, 244, 319, 367, 397
German Ninth Panzer Army, 421
German 90th Light Motorized, 150, 152
German opposition to Allied invasion, report on, 292-96
German Panzer Lehr Division, 376
German Panzers (unspecified), 163-64, 243, 272, 286, 330, 387, 394
German pilotless aircraft, 228, 286-87, 288-89, 290
German pilots, 269
German propaganda, 245, 253, 289, 290
German (and Occupied) railways, installations, yards, etc., 238, 245, 250, 255, 258, 259, 262, 263, 266, 268, 272, 287, 299, 307, 402-403
German report on Allied tactics in invasion, 291-96
German robots and rockets, *see* V-1s *and* V-2s
German secret weapons, 228, 230, 244 (*see also as above*)
German 7th Armored ("Desert Rats"), 170
German Seventh Army, 313, 334
German situation early in 1944, 242-44
German 6th Parachute Division, 376
German strength—in 1944, 242-44; on D-day, 276; fighter, 234, 244-45; naval, 242-43; in ground troops, 243
German surrender, 218-19, 395, 426
German transport planes, 184-85, 187
German 12th Panzer Division, 283, 308
German 21st Panzer Division, 151, 162, 182, 282, 283
German ultimatum at Bastogne, 377-78, 383
Germans in N. Africa, *see* Afrika Korps
Germans' water ration in Africa, 137
Germersheim (Germany), 415
Gernsheim (Germany), 415
Gestapo, 239 n., 395
Gezira Sporting Club (Cairo), 191, 208
Ghedahia (N. Africa), 176, 177
Gheel (Belgium), 344
Givet (France), 389
Givray (France), 319
gliders, 252, 260, 262-63, 277, 278, 343-44, 374, 396, 409-14
"Golden Talon," *see* 17th Airborne Division
"Gooseberries," 286
Gosfield (England), 245
governments-in-exile, 224, 238
Grandcamp-les-Bains (France), 284, 289, 301-302, 307
Granville (France), 302, 317, 319
Grave (Holland), 343, 345, 346, 350, 364
Great Dunmow (England), 228, 247 ff.
Greece, 149
*Green Goose* (bomber), 179
Greenham Common (England), 251-52, 277
Greenville (Mich.), 277
Groesbeek (Holland), 343
ground and air forces, coöperation between, 142-43, 157-58, 182, 230, 233, 299, 305, 308, 319-20, 324 n.
Ground Force Assault Training Center (Devon), 223
Guam, 16-17; landing fields on, 15 n., 17
Guards Armored Division, 343, 346, 349, 350, 350-51 n., 354, 360, 414
Gura (Eritrea), 140

Hagenau (France), 424
*Hail Columbia* (bomber), 156
Haine St. Pierre (France), 258, 259
Halberstadt (Germany), 234
Hallouf (Tunisia), 181
Halmark (Germany), 239 n.
Haltern (Germany), 414
Halverson detachment, 109, 141, 146, 200
Hamburg (Germany), 229
Hamminkeln (Germany), 407
Hanover (Germany), 237, 247, 269



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*Haruna*, 48 n.
Hasselt (Belgium), 257, 258, 259
Havocs, 255, 259, 260, 261, 262, 298, 311, 313
Haw Haw, Lord, 217
Hawaiian Air Force, 12
Hawaiian Islands, 12-13, 14, 65
Heaveadorp ferry (Holland), 353, 354
Heliopolis (Egypt), 135-36
Heraklion airfield (Crete), 175-76
*Hermes*, 118
High Wycombe (England), 227, 246 ff.
Hirson (France), 255, 259, 263
Hofgeismar (Germany), 399
Holland, 340-66, 401, 417
Homalin (Burma), 121, 122, 124
Hompre (Belgium), 378
Honolulu (T. H.), 11-13, 36 n.
Horsas (gliders), 374, 405, 407
*Houston*, 71
"Hump," the, 112, 123, 124, 127
Hungarian forces fighting in Russia, 147
Hurricanes, 85, 138, 162

Iba (P. I.) landing field, 22, 36, 40, 42
Iceland, 165 n.
Ijmuiden (Holland), 233, 253
Imphal (Burma), 121, 122, 124
Independence Day (1943), 191, (1944), 301-302
India, 105-106, 108-31, 140; possible Japanese attack on, 114
Indian Civil Service, 116
Indian Government, 116
Indian Princes, 112
Indo-China, 10
Inniskillen Fusiliers, 108
Intelligence, 78, 128-29, 149; personnel and training, 220; in ETO, 274, 275, 277, 287, 291 (*see also* G-2)
Interceptor Command, 23, 32, 35
invasion of N. W. Europe, *see* Exercises BEAVER, etc., and Operation OVERLORD
Iran, 149, 180
Iraq, 140, 179-80
Irrawaddy River and Valley, 106, 107, 112
Isigny (France), 275, 279, 284, 312
Issel River, 407
Italian Navy, 141, 173
Italians in N. Africa—air force, 138, 162, 179; army, 138, 166, 168, 174, 179, 182, 187; parachutists, 190
Italy, 183, 186, 192, 207, 218-19, 242

Jam Sahib, 112
Japan, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 24, 67, 390; prewar negotiations with, 24-25, 31, 33, 35
Japanese air force, 35, 39, 40, 41, 46, 58, 60, 61 n., 64, 79, 84-85, 86, 129
Japanese army in S. W. Pacific, 84
Japanese attack—on what date expected, 19-20, 24-25, 33, 34, 37-38, 67; on Philippines, 41-49; on Borneo, 72; on Java, 86-87; on Burma, 106-108
Japanese espionage—in Australia, 30; in the Philippines, 43, 51, 57, 65, 67
Japanese nationals in U. S., 11
Japanese navy, 45, 84, 85, 100
Japanese pilots, 52
Japanese propaganda, 43, 52, 111
Java, 24, 29, 31, 71-72, 76-79, 81, 83, 84-99; failure in defense of, 100-102
jet-propelled aircraft, 244, 319, 367, 397
Jodhpur (India), 116
Ju-88s, 161, 251, 279, 349; factory, 234
Ju-52s, 184-85, 187, 189

Kalewa (India), 123
Kamranh Bay (Indo-China), 34
Kansas, 401
Karachi air base (India), 109, 110, 114, 115, 119-20, 131
Kassel (Germany), 399, 400, 406, 418-19
"Keep Mobile" signs, 222
Kendari (Celebes), 78, 86, 102
Khartoum (Egypt), 140, 142
Khurramshar (Iran), 180
Khyber Pass, 123
Kiel naval base (Germany), 229, 340
Kilo 13 (Cairo), 175, 207
Kittyhawks, 138, 141
Koevering (Holland), 356
Krupp Works, 425-26
*Kungsholm*, 84
Kunming (China), 109, 123, 126; flight to, 127-28

La Haye-du-Puits (France), 280
La Mare à Canards (France), 299-300
La Union (P. I.), 40, 43
labor troubles—at Papua, 27; at Darwin, 80; at Bombay, 110
*Lady Pinch-Bottle* (Marauder), 260
Lae (New Guinea), 28
Lafayette Escadrille, 258



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Laguna de Baie (P. I.), 63-64
Lampedusa, 189, 210
Lancasters, 345
*Langley*, 78 n.
Laon (France), 245
Laoshan (Burma), 123
Lashio (Burma), 114, 121, 124, 127, 128
"Late Arrivals" club, 183
Laval (France), 305
LB-30s, 85
LCIs, 255
LCRs, 255
LCTs, 255, 279
Le Havre (France), 396
Le Mans (France), 287, 332, 334
Legaspi (P. I.), 53-54
Legion of Merit, 208-209
Leipzig (Germany), 304, 423
Lembang (Java), 83, 84-90
Lembeck (Germany), 414
Lend Lease—to China, 126; to Russia, 179
Leros, 210
Les Dunes de Varreville (France), 275
*Lexington*, 236
Leyte (P. I.), 51
Liberators, *see* B-24s
*Liberty Lady* (B-26), 225-26
Libramont (Belgium), 378
Libya, 130, 136, 167 ff.
Liége (Belgium), 339, 377
Lightnings, 254, 262, 268, 304, 307, 309, 346
Lille (France), 225
Lingayen Gulf (P. I.), 35, 40, 46, 49, 51, 53, 59, 60
Linosa, 189
Lippe Canal, 404
Littorio yards (Rome), 194, 196
Lockheed Hudsons, 85
Loire River, 273, 275; bridges, 284
Loiwing (Burma), 121, 124
London, 240, 241, 245, 250-51; fire-fighting, 250-51; V-1s and V-2s on, 286-89, 290, 291, 299, 305, 339
*London Times* correspondent's story of gliders, 412-14
Longpré (France), 280
Lorient (France), 324
LSTs, 255
Ludwigshafen (Germany), 231
Luftwaffe, 4, 179, 182, 220, 228, 229, 240, 241, 242, 243-44, 245, 249-50, 250-51, 260, 269, 271, 291, 336, 346, 377, 390, 406, 415, 416, 420, 421; strength on D-day, 276 ff.
Luneville (France), 393
Luxembourg, 340, 372
Luzon (P. I.), 21, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 44, 45, 49, 51, 60, 62, 76
Lydda (Palestine) Airport, 139, 146, 153-54
Lysanders, 150

Maas River, 340
Macassar field (Celebes), 102
Macassar Straits, 83, 85, 87, 88, 89, 102
Macchi-200s, 179
Macchi-202s, 162, 207
Madioen (Java), attacked, 86
Mae Wests, 258
Magdeburg (Germany), 392
Magwe (Burma), 106, 108
Mainz (Germany), 340, 371, 415, 418
Maison Blanche airfield (Algiers), 171
Maisons Laffitte (France), 360 ff.
Malang (Java), 72, 76, 78, 83, 84, 102; attacked, 86
Malay Barrier, 24, 88; defined, 79; reasons for failure in defense of, 100-102
Malay Peninsula, 24, 75
Malaya, 24, 31, 84
Malines (Belgium), 259
Malta, 170-71, 172
Maltot (France), 312
Mandalay (Burma), 107, 112, 120
maneuvers, air (U. S.), 3-4, 5, 74
Manila (P. I.), 9, 17-25, 30-67; attacked, *see* Philippines
Manila Bay, 22
Manila Radio Station, 35
Mannheim (Germany), 340, 371, 415
Mantes-Gassicourt (France), 262, 334
*Maquis*, 287-88, 335, 368-69
Marauders, *see* B-26s
"Marble Arch," 173, 177
Marche (Belgium), 377, 378
Mareth Line (Tunisia), 178, 181-84
Marigny (France), 317, 318
*Mariposa*, 84
Mark IV (Sherman) tanks, 163
Mark's Hall (England), 232
Masbate (P. I.), 54
Maxwell Field (Ala.), 57-58 n.
Maxton (N. C.), 215
Maymyo (Burma), 113-14
Me-109s, 143, 146, 156, 162, 163, 173, 184-85, 207, 225, 235, 239, 257, 287
Me-163 and Me-262 (jet-propelled), 319
Me-110s, 184-85; factory, 234
Me-323s, 187
Medinine (Tunisia), 178, 181
Mediterranean Air Command, 192
*Meggs*, 56 n.



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Melbourne (Australia), 26, 28-30, 72, 75-76, 79, 81, 83
Menado (Celebes), 102
Mersa-Matruh (Egypt), 143, 146, 166, 210
Merseburg (Germany), 392
Messerschmitt Airframe Works, 197, 205-206
Messina (Sicily), 183, 187, 193, 207
Metz (France), 400
Meuse River, 274, 389
Mexican Air Force, 314
Middle East Air Force, 136-67; strength, 160; at El Alamein, 166-67; becomes Ninth Air Force (*q.v.*), 167-68
Middle East Defense Council, 154, 155-56, 182
Middle Wallop (England), 221
Midway Island, 14
Milazzo (Sicily), 207
*Mild and Bitter* (Marauder), 233, 263
Military Cross, 368
Military Medal, 368-69
Mindanao (P. I.), 21, 29, 36; airfields, 32-33, 62, 64
Mindoro (P. I.), 51
Mingaladon (Burma), 106, 120, 121
Miri (Borneo), 72
Misurata (Tripolitania), 177
Mitchells, 109, 119, 128, 141, 175-76, 182, 238, 258
mobility, 222, 254, 257
Molucca Straits, 89
Monceau-Sambre (Belgium), 262
Monschau (Germany), 374, 375
Montebourg (France), 284, 287, 297
Montmirail (France), 368-69
morale—Chinese, 125, 126; German, 316 n., 336, 384-85; airborne troops at Bastogne, 386 n.
*Mormacasun,* 81-82
Mortain (France), 330, 332
Moselle River, 340, 342
Mosquitoes, 238, 258, 288, 319, 345
Mourmelon-le-Grand (France), 371, 376
"Mulberries," 286
Munich (Germany), 398, 415
Muquibila (Palestine), 142, 145
Mustangs, *see* P-51s
Myitkyina (Burma), 121, 122, 123, 125, 127

Nahr-el-Kel (Lebanon), 145
Namur (Belgium), 259, 377, 389
Napalm, 309-10
Naples, 173, 194
Navarino Bay, attacks on Italian cruisers in, 146, 156
Navy Patrol Wing, 37
Netherlands East Indies, 10, 24, 31, 62, 76-79, 83-100; Air Forces, 71; Army, 71; failure in defense of, 100-102
Neufchâteau (Belgium), 394
Neuwied (Germany), 340
New Britain, 27-28
New Delhi (India), 105, 108-12, 114-23, 125-27, 128-29, 130-31, 135
New Guinea, 29, 82
New York Giants, 191
New Zealand troops, 138, 151, 152, 163, 166, 177, 182
Nichols Field (P. I.), 9, 21, 22, 40, 43, 46, 48, 51, 61
Nicosia airfield (Cyprus), 142
Nielson Field (P. I.), 20, 39, 44, 46
night fighters, 251, 267, 268
Nijmegen bridge (Holland), 343, 345, 349, 350, 352-53, 354, 355, 356, 360, 364
907th Battalion, 380
19th Bomb Group, 25, 39, 46-49, 72, 78
XIX Corps, 287
XIX TAC, 234, 237, 254, 255, 265, 270, 321, 324, 335, 336
90th Division, 283, 321
98th Bomb Group, 141, 142, 143, 145, 153, 166, 170, 172, 175, 181, 192, 199, 200, 208
93rd Bomb Group, 175, 190, 192, 198, 208
9th Armored Division, 385, 398
9th Bomb Squadron, 115, 116-17, 118, 121, 123, 126, 141, 146, 166
Ninth Bomber Command, 168, 180, 186, 190, 192, 195, 197, 198, 208, 218, 219, 231, 232, 253, 269; on D-day, 280
9th Division, 289, 313, 318, 321
Ninth Fighter Command, 218, 221, 230-31, 289; on D-day, 280
IX TAC, 234, 255, 265, 270, 279, 281, 282, 286, 298, 299, 305, 310, 312, 321, 336; record (for late July '44), 321-22
IX Troop Carrier Command, 308, 350 n.
Normandy, 272-316
North Africa Air Force, 184
North Africa campaign, 99, 135-87
North American Aviation Corp., 241
Northolt (England) airfield, 258
Norway, 421-22
Noville (Belgium), 384, 393



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Nürnberg (Germany), 239-40 n., 423
"Nuts!," 378, 383

Oahu (T. H.), 12, 13
Obermasfeld (Germany), 239-40 n.
Oise Base Section, 375
Oise River, 263, 274
Old Sarum (England), 226
101st Airborne Division, 221, 231, 232, 236, 251-52, 263, 267, 276, 278, 279, 285, 308, 324, 331, 337, 367, 370, 371, 375-76, 377, 380, 386 n., 387, 388, 390, 391, 392-93, 399; in Operation MARKET, 343-58, 363; Ardennes casualties, 392; cited, 401-402
194th Glider Infantry, 419
102nd Division, 424
106th Division, 374, 387
103rd Division, 399
Oosterbeek (Holland), 349
Operations:
ANVIL (invasion of S. France), 333-34, 335, 365
ARENA (airborne phase of German invasion), 399-401, 406, 416
AVALANCHE (invasion of Italy), 208
BOXER (Boulogne), 334, 336
CHOKER I (Siegfried Line at Saarbrücken), 340
CHOKER II (Rhine crossing), 340, 371, 416
COBRA (St. Lô-Periers road), 306, 307, 311, 312, 313-17
COMET (Rhine bridges), 340
DRAGOON (airborne phase of ANVIL), 361
ECLIPSE (Berlin), 370-71, 373, 396, 398, 415
EFFECTIVE (airhead in front of Seventh Army), 416
ERUPTION (Kiel), 370
GARDEN (Holland), 343
HUSKY (Sicily), 182, 183, 184, 187, 193, 207
INFATUATE (Walcheren Island), 340
JUBILANT (airborne to protect PWs), 415
JUGGLER (Messerschmitt Works), 197-98, 205-206
LINNET (Lille area), 336, 338
LINNET II (Aachen-Maastricht Gap), 337, 338
LUCKY STRIKE B (Bocage area), 323
MARKET (Holland corridor), 338, 340, 341, 342-67, 373; number of planes, etc., 345; losses, 357-58, 366; report on, 360-61
MILAN I (Siegfried Line at Trier), 340
MILAN II (Rhine crossing), 340
NAPLES I (east of Aachen), 340
NAPLES II (Rhine bridgehead), 340, 367
NEPTUNE (assault phase of OVERLORD), 270, 273, 275-76
OVERLORD (invasion of N. W. Europe), 220, 222, 226, 230, 236, 245, 249, 256-57, 260-61, 364, 396; final briefings, date set, 264, 265; report on air readiness for, 265-68; total planes, 261, 265; signal setup, 268; plans complete, 270-73; accomplished, 276-79; losses, 278
PLUNDER (Rhine crossing), 395
POINT-BLANK (on German air force and industries), 219-20, 266
RAINBOW FIVE, 33 n.
RANKIN (in case of sudden German collapse), 218-19, 228
SOAPSUDS (Rumanian oil refineries), 189 (*see also* TIDAL WAVE)
TALISMAN (airborne invasion of Berlin), 340 (*see also* ECLIPSE)
TIDAL WAVE (final name for Ploesti attacks), 191, 192-93, 194, 195-96, 197, 198-201, 208; results reported, 201-205
TRANSFIGURE (phase of LUCKY STRIKE B), 324, 333, 334
VARSITY (airborne phase of Rhine crossing), 396, 397, 398, 403-15

Orléans (France), 307
Orne River, 279, 282
Oschersleben (Germany), 234, 254
OSS (Office of Strategic Services), 287
*Ostfriedland*, 157
Ouistreham (France), 275, 276
Ourthe River, 378
Ourtheville (Belgium), 378

P-51s, P-51Bs (Mustangs), 216, 221-22, 224, 229, 234-35, 237, 238, 240, 241, 246, 258, 259, 260, 262, 264, 265, 268, 269, 311, 315, 345, 346
P-40s, 22, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 58, 60, 74, 85, 86, 87, 109, 115, 129, 138, 141, 142, 143, 146, 148, 161, 162, 169, 180, 182, 184
P-40Fs, 109
P-47s (Thunderbolts), 216, 231, 234, 237, 238, 240, 246, 254, 257, 259, 262, 263, 265, 266, 268, 288, 300, 304, 307, 309, 313, 315, 319-20, 334, 345, 346, 382, 383
P-61s (Black Widows), 261



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P-38s, 216, 246, 265, 291, 310, 313, 315
P-35s, 22, 43, 44, 58, 60
P-39s, 180, 216
P-36s, 23
P-26s, 58
Pacific Fleet, 14
Packard Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, 222
Paderborn (Germany), 399, 416
Palembang (Sumatra), 86
Palermo (Sicily), 178
Palestine, 142, 146, 153-54
"Palm Sunday Massacre," 184-85, 189
Pantelleria, 189, 210
Paoshan (Burma), 128
Papua, 26-27
parachutes, 258, 370
paratroops, 147, 251-52, 263, 276-79, 285, 309 (*see also* airborne troops)
Paris, 324, 333, 334, 335, 341-42
Paris-Orléans Gap, 273, 324, 330
Pas-de-Calais (France), 224, 227-28, 237, 238, 240, 258, 266, 273
Pearl Harbor (T. H.), 14, 36 n., 38, 39
Periers (France), 306, 312
Persia, *see* Iran
Persian Gulf, 136
Persian Gulf Command, 179
Peshawar (India), 123
*Petresino,* 167
Philippine Air Depot, 66
Philippine Air Force, 23, 65, 66; pilots, 58
Philippine Army, 20, 23, 37, 63, 66
Philippine Commonwealth, 21, 24, 39 n., 43, 65, 66
Philippine Department, 19
Philippine Scouts, 37, 51
Philippines, 5-11, 17-25, 84; plans for defense of, 31-34, 36-37, 67; attacked, 41-49; collapse of resistance analyzed, 64-67; security not provided, 64-65; or mobility, 65; lack of airfields, bombers, funds, machinery, etc., 65, 66
photographic reconnaissance, *see* reconnaissance
pilots, American, 7-8, 147
plane-to-tank communication, 311, 319-20
Ploesti (Rumania), 141, 188 n., 191, 196, 197, 198-205; location and defense, 200, 208-209
Poitiers (France), 287
Polish troops, *see* 1st Polish Paratroop Brigade
pontoon bridges, 333
Port Blair (Andaman Islands), 114, 116-17, 119
Port Moresby (New Guinea), 15 n., 26-30, 81
Portee 75s, 113
*President Coolidge,* 56, 84
Prestone, 74-75
propaganda, *see under* German *and* Japanese
PWs—Allied, 204 n., 395, 401, 404, 414, 415, 422, 423, 425; German, 251, 283, 290, 316, 320, 384-85, 387, 421

Quattara depression (N. Africa), 159
Quartermaster Corps, 172
Queen's Own Kentish, 123
Quinéville (France), 243

Rabaul (New Britain), 26, 27-28
radar, 22, 42, 64, 216, 290, 291; German, 209
radar-controlled dive-bombing, 309-10
Radio Berlin, 205 n., 217, 290, 335, 403
radio, "Black Market," 272
Radio Calais, 245
radio equipment, 221
Radio Luxembourg, 404
Radio, Manila, 35
radio propaganda, German, 245, 253 (*see also* Radio Berlin)
radio, Rome, 196
RAF, 114, 122, 135, 137-38, 141, 147, 148, 150, 160, 162, 163-64, 171, 172, 177, 184-85, 190, 193, 220-21, 224, 226, 237, 240, 261, 284, 285, 298, 310, 330, 406-407, 412
RAF Bomber Command, 221, 288, 358
RAF Fighter Command, 220
Ramat-David (Palestine), 142, 146, 153
Randazzo (Sicily), 207
*Ranger,* 142
Ranger Battalions, 2nd and 5th, 276, 281, 284
Rangoon (Burma), 31, 73, 106, 108, 114, 115, 117-18, 119, 120
Reading (England), 402
Rebecca equipment, 216
reconnaissance, 29, 37, 77-78, 137, 151, 268, 299, 403; enemy's, before the invasion, 274-75; photographic, 34-35, 42, 45, 238-39, 244, 253, 260, 268, 270, 274, 321
"Red Devils," *see* British 1st Airborne Division
Reggio di Calabria (Italy), 187, 208



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Regia Aeronautica, 179
Règne (Belgium), 387
Reims (France), 337, 374, 375, 426
Remagen (Germany), 398, 415
Rennes (France), 323, 324
*Republic*, 74
Ressen (Holland), 354
Reuter's, 129
Rhine, 340, 341, 395-415
Rhodes, 210
Ridge 102 (Libya), 150-51
*Rigor Mortis* (Mustang), 248
road blocks, 297-98, 299
rockets, 309, 330, 334; German, *see* V-2s
Roer River, 372, 395
Rome, 188 n., 194-95, 196
Rosales (P. I.), 43
Rouen (France), 396
Ruhr (Germany), 340, 399, 402, 406, 415-16, 421, 423, 425
Rumania, 141, 200; King and Queen of, 204-205 n.
Rumanian forces fighting in Russia, 147
Rumania oil refineries, 141, 183, 188 n., 189, 191, 196, 197, 198-205 (*see also* Operation TIDAL WAVE)
Rumanians' reactions to Ploesti raid, 204 n., 205 n.
Russia and the Russians, 136, 145, 147, 149, 158-59, 163, 169, 179-80, 200, 218, 239-40 n., 249, 290, 373, 396, 398, 422, 423-24, 425; Red Army anniversary, 242
Ryak base (Palestine), 153

Saar River, 372
Saarbrücken (Germany), 340
Saarbourg (France), 393
saboteurs, 395, 418
Sagen (Germany), 239-40 n.
Samar (P. I.), 43
Samarinda (Borneo), 76, 83, 102
San Domenico Hotel, Taormina, 193
San Fernando (P. I.), 43
San Giovanni (Italy), 183
San José (P. I.), 47, 51
San Lorenzo Basilica (Rome), 196
San Lorenzo yards (Rome), 194
San Marcelino (P. I.), 45-49, 60
Santo Tomas (P. I.), 59
Sardinia, 160
SAS (Special Air Service), 287, 368, 395, 417, 418
*Scharnhorst*, 242
Scheldt River, 340
Schijndel (Holland), 363
*Scorpion* (bomber), 206
2nd Armored Division, 313, 321
2nd Canadian Corps, 370, 417
II Corps, 186
2nd Division, 321, 399
2nd Parachute Battalion, 350, 352
security, 119, 128-29, 154, 155-56, 335, 393, 402
Sedan (France), 337
Seine River, 273, 275, 333, 334, 335, 341; bridges, 272, 273, 280
Senousi Bedouins, 174
Sesqueux (France), 280
705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 385
17th Airborne Division, 308, 336, 360, 374, 376, 389, 390, 391, 393-94, 395, 399, 403, 406, 407, 408, 409, 417, 419, 421, 425; Ardennes casualties, 392; VARSITY casualties, 414
17th Pursuit Squadron, 40, 58, 81, 86
7th Armored Division, 393
7th Bomb Group, 36
VII Corps, 275, 281, 283, 284, 287, 289-90, 305, 307, 318
71st Fighter Wing, 254
79th Division, 299-300, 321, 335
79th Fighter Group, 141, 166, 169, 208
64th Fighter Squadron, 150
69th Division, 422
67th Pursuit Group, 84
Sfax (Tunisia), 175
SHAEF, 240, 322, 323, 324, 333, 334, 335, 344, 367, 370, 373, 374, 375, 387, 396, 414, 418, 424
"Shark" squadron (Kittyhawks), 189
Shepheard's Hotel (Cairo), 139
Shwebo (Burma), 125
Sibret (Belgium), 378
Sicily, 177, 187, 207
Siegfried Line, 337, 339, 340, 341
Silver Star, 93, 97 n., 127, 425
Sinaia hospital (Rumania), 204-205 n.
Singapore, 24, 29, 75, 85, 90, 100, 101, 114
Sissonne (France), 370, 375
Sittang River, 107, 111
6th Armored Division, 321, 323
VI Corps, 420 n.
67th Photo Reconnaissance Group, 260
63rd Infantry Brigade, 108
"ski sites," 228
*Snooty* (troop carrier), 277 n.
Soesterberg (Holland), 247
*Son of Satan* (Marauder), 258
Sousse (Tunisia), 175



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South African forces in N. Africa, 150, 155, 163
Southeast Asia Command, 371
Spitfires, 138, 162, 177, 182, 225, 258, 345, 390
St. André de l'Eure (France), 225
St. Gilles (France), 317
St. Hubert (Belgium), 378
St. Jean base (Palestine), 153
St. Laurent (France), 286
St. Lô (France), 275, 276, 306, 312, 330
St. Malo (France), 324, 329
St. Omer (France), 225
St. Pierre-du-Mont (France), 286
St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte (France), 276, 280
St. Vith (Belgium), 374, 388, 393, 398
Ste. Mère Eglise (France), 275, 283
Stettin (Germany), 264
Stirlings, 355
Stockhausen (Germany), 419
Stukas, 162, 163, 177, 271, 349
Subic Bay (P. I.), 52
submarines, 83, 243, 275
Suda Bay, 153
Suez Canal, 136, 174
Suippes (France), 375
Sulu Sea, 71, 102
Sunningdale (England), 226, 227
supply and resupply, 169-70, 172, 173, 335, 336, 339, 342, 350, 353, 364, 365, 380, 383, 386, 387, 388, 389, 391, 398, 417, 419, 423 (for German, *see* Afrika Korps)
Surabaya (Java), 71-72, 76, 83; attacked, 86
Sweden, 421-22
Syria, 140, 145, 172

Tacloban (P. I.), 47, 51
Takao (P. I.), 34, 35, 37, 39
Tampa (Fla.), 215
Tangmere (England), 259
tank-to-plane communication, 311, 319-20
Taormina (Sicily), 193
Tarakan (Borneo), 72, 79, 102; attack off, 83-84
Taranto (Italy), attack on Italian fleet at, 141
targets (ETO), 220, 222, 250, 265-66; CROSSBOW, 224, 230, 231, 232, 240, 255-258, 260, 265-66, 269, 287; NO BALL, 224, 227-28, 230, 240, 245, 254
Tarlac (P. I.), 40
Tasman Sea, 81
Tauroga (Tripolitania), 177
Teddington (England), 213
Teheran (Iran), 180
Tel el Aqqaqir (N. Africa), 163
Tempelhof Airdrome (Berlin), 373, 395
Tempests, 345
10th Armored Division, 380, 386 n., 419-20
10th Fighter Group, 220
Tezpur (India), 128
Thanksgiving, 1942, in N. Africa, 172
3rd Armored Division, 313, 321, 330
3rd Bomb Group, 54
3rd Canadian Division, 248, 276, 279
3rd Pursuit Squadron, 40, 42
13th Airborne Division, 389, 398, 399, 416, 424
30th Division, 313, 315, 321
38th Bomb Group, 84
38th Group (RAF), 308
35th Division, 321
35th Pursuit Group, 84
31st Pursuit Group, 84
34th Pursuit Squadron, 40
32nd Guards Brigade, 355
389th Bomb Group, 192, 199, 208
386th Bomber Group, 258
315th Service Group, 208
354th Fighter Group, 221, 224, 229, 231, 234-35, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 257, 258, 264, 269, 287
340th Bomb Group, 208
391st Medium Bomb Group, 238
397th Bomb Group, 192
371st Fighter Group, 257, 289
376th Bomb Group, 166, 170, 172, 175, 181, 192, 198, 199, 200, 208
376th Fighter Group, 257
316th Troop Carrier Group, 167, 169, 172, 177, 208
368th Bomber Group, 300
368th Fighter Group, 238, 282
365th Fighter Group, 245, 253, 254, 282
366th Fighter Group, 238, 282
325th Glider Regiment, 364
324th Fighter Group, 141, 208
322nd Marauder Group, 304
327th Parachute Infantry, 384
323rd Service Group, 208
Thruxton Air Field (England), 254
Thunderbolts, *see* P-47s
Thyssen works, 425
Tillet (Belgium), 378
Tobruk (Libya), 130, 136, 138, 141, 149, 154, 155, 160, 164, 167; taken by British, 168
Tokyo, bombing of, 119, 139
Torgau (Germany), 422



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Toujane (Tunisia), 181
Toungoo (Burma), 113
Townsville (Australia), 26, 28, 73, 81
Tracy-sur-Mer (France), 276
Trans-Africa Ferry, 84, 140
Trans-Pacific Air Ferry, 6, 24, 25; route, 25, 36 n.
Treadway bridges, 415
Tricqueville (France), 225
Trier (Germany), 340, 371, 374, 375
Trincomalee (Ceylon), 118
Tripoli, 170, 172, 174, 176, 177
Troop Carrier Command, 215, 218, 221, 222, 223, 231, 241, 251-52, 262, 263-64, 265, 267, 331-32, 339, 343, 396, 398, 402, 403, 419, 420 n., 423; on D-day, 276-79, 280; in MARKET, 344 ff.; at Ardennes, 374, 387, 388, 389, 391; in VARSITY, 406-407, 417
troop carriers, *see* airborne troops, C-47s, *and* CG-4As
Tuguegarao (P. I.), 40
Turkey, 141, 205
Tunis, 173, 175, 186, 191, 196-97, 264
Tunisia, 171, 173-87, 368
12th Army Group, 375, 392-93, 416
12th Bomb Group, 141, 144, 146, 148, 150, 151 n., 155, 166, 175, 208
20th Pursuit Group, 115
20th Pursuit Squadron, 40, 41, 42, 59
28th Division, 321
21st Army Group, 228, 336, 341, 342, 361, 395, 396
21st Pursuit Squadron, 40
24th Pursuit Group, 56, 59-60
29th Division, 276, 313, 321
XXIX TAC, 405
22nd Bomb Group, 84
27th Bomb Group, 56-57, 74, 83
23rd Fighter Group (AVG), 109, 121, 125, 129, 234, 236
Typhoons, 238, 258, 330, 354, 390

underwater obstacles, 243, 262 (*see also* beach defenses)
United Nations, 147
U.S. Air Forces, their control, command, relations with RAF, 284
U.S. air power in 1941, 7-8
U.S. Army in Australia, 73, 74
U.S. Army Air Corps round-the-world flight, 12
U.S. Civil Service Commission, 23
U.S. Congress, 17, 65
U.S. Eighth Air Force, 196-97, 208, 213, 214, 219, 220-21, 225, 229, 232, 237, 245, 251, 256, 288, 304, 310, 311, 358, 392, 395, 406
U.S. Eighth Air Support Command (absorbed by Ninth Air Force), 217, 218
U.S. Fifteenth Army, 396, 415-16
U.S. First Air Force, 226
U.S. First Army, 229, 275, 276, 288, 312, 313, 314, 321, 336-37, 339-40, 342, 372, 398, 415, 416, 422
U.S. forces—in Australia and ABDACOM, command of, 79; in the U.K., 171
U.S. General Staff, 165
U.S. Marines, 14, 16
U.S. Maritime Commission, 82
U.S. Military Academy, 17 n., 379
U.S. Naval Academy, 17 n., 100, 303
U.S. Navy, 16, 34-35, 59, 72, 78, 257, 261, 285; Force U, 261
U.S. Navy Department, 37, 38, 65
U.S. Ninth Air Force—in the Middle East, 167-68, 172-73, 174-75, 178, 179, 182, 185, 189, 190, 193, 194-95, 196-97, 206, 207, 214; Hqs. transferred to England, 208; its record, 210, 214
in ETO, 213 ff., 220, 225, 228, 229, 232, 237, 239 n., 240, 250, 251, 257, 261-62, 286, 288, 299, 300-301, 307, 315, 323, 330-31, 358, 365, 406; distinguished from Eighth, 213; composition and readying, 213-18; shortage of personnel and planes, 236; ready for invasion, 265-68; missions, 272; record in preliminary program, 273; part in invasion, 275-81; question of control of, 284, 300-301; size and achievements (June '44), 298; strength of aircraft and personnel (August '44), 326
U.S. Ninth Air Force PRO, 191, 330
U.S. Ninth Army, 314, 372, 404, 405, 416
USO, 188, 402
U.S. Seventh Army, 193, 340, 371, 392, 415, 416, 420 n., 423
USSTAF, 232, 239, 253
U.S. State Department, 10, 116
U.S. Strategic Air Forces, 220, 232
U.S. Tactical Air Force, 205, 208, 213
U.S. Tenth Air Force, 106, 109-11, 115, 116-17, 120, 126, 141; supplies, port facilities, fields, etc., 109-10, 112, 115, 116
U.S. Third Air Force, 3, 7-8, 215
U.S. Third Army, 237, 321, 323,



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324, 336-37, 340, 342, 372, 398, 415, 423
U.S. Twelfth Air Force, 182, 193, 194-95, 208, 232
U.S. War Department, 9, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 22, 30-31, 33-34, 36, 38, 65, 73, 79, 82, 83, 111, 113, 130, 136, 139, 146, 207, 215, 370
Uxbridge (England), 240

V-1s (winged flying bombs, robots), 228, 230, 244, 286-87, 288-89, 290, 291, 299, 305, 339; launching sites, 296-97 (*see also* Pas-de-Calais *and* targets CROSSBOW *and* NO BALL)
V-2s (rockets), 228, 230, 238, 244, 255, 307, 309-10, 319, 339; launching sites *as above*
Valkenswaard (Holland), 346
Valognes (France), 280, 296, 297
Veghel (Holland), 346, 354, 355, 356
Vents (France), 313
Verdun (France), 389
Versailles (France), 335
Vichy French, 140
Vernon (France), 266, 334
Verviers (Belgium), 377
Vielsalm (Belgium), 388
Vigan (P. I.), 40, 43, 46, 47, 49, 56, 57 n., 58
Villa San Giovanni (Italy), 183, 187, 208
Villedieu (France), 317
Volkel (Holland), 247

Waal River, 340, 354, 363
WACs, 247
Waffen SS, 404
Wake Island, 15-16, 36 n.
Walcheren Island (Holland), 340, 345, 353
war commentators, 364
war correspondents, 119, 128, 129, 191, 281, 303-304, 378 n., 379, 408-14
Warhawks, 185
Washington, D.C., 214-17
Washington conference, 188, 194
*Wasp*, 236
weather conditions, 216, 219, 220, 224, 237, 258, 271, 273, 274 n., 314, 345, 350, 364, 374, 393, 397
Weather information—in Pacific, 15; for Normandy invasion, 274 n., 275
Welford Park (England), 276-77
Wallingtons, 85, 138, 162
Werbemont (Belgium), 376
Wesel (Germany), 340, 396, 405, 407, 412, 415
Western Desert (N. Africa), 136, 148, 160-66, 168-69, 179
Western Desert Air Force, 142-43, 149-52, 154, 160, 168-69, 177, 179
Wide Wing (England), 213
Wiener-Neustadt (Austria), 197-98, 205-206
Wiesbaden (Germany), 418
Wilhelmina Canal (Holland), 349
Wilhelmshaven (Germany), 238
Windsor (England), 227
Wismar (Germany), 423
*Witch, The* (bomber), 156
World War I, 18, 28, 99, 157, 258, 309, 337
Würzburg (Germany), 419

Xanten bridge (Germany), 407

"Yacht Club Boys," 188
Yunanyi (China), 123, 124

Zablan (P. I.), 58
Zamboanga (P. I.), 49
Zeros, *see* Japanese air force
Zig Zaw wadi, 182
Zon Canal bridge (Holland), 349, 350
Zuider Zee (Holland), 343



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# INDEX OF PERSONS

*Ranks as of Summer 1946*


Adams, Maj. Gen. Emory S., 52
Adams, Lieut. Jack, 54
Adler, Maj. Gen. Elmer E., 105, 131, 159, 160, 167, 168, 169
Alexander, FM Sir Harold, 108 n., 121, 122, 123, 124, 131, 146, 153, 154, 159, 179, 193
Allen, Maj. Gen. Leven C., 232
Altman, Pfc. Robert E., 48
Amundsen, Lieut. Maynard N., 260
Anderson, Maj. Gen. Sam E., 218
Andrews, Lieut. Gen. Frank M., 165, 167, 177, 178
Antonescu, Marshal, 204 n.
Appold, Maj. Norman C., 183, 210
Arnim, Gen. Jürgen von, 186
Arnold, General of the Army Henry H., 3, 5, 6, 18, 19, 34, 36, 50, 52, 76, 141, 146, 177-78, 190, 201, 202 n., 214, 256, 265, 284, 302, 308, 323, 332, 333, 360, 364-65, 366, 373, 391-92, 416
Auchinleck, Gen. Sir Claude J. E., 130, 136, 138, 140, 144, 146-47
Auchinleck, Lady, 121
Avila, Gen., 314

Backus, Brig. Gen. Ed, 56, 96, 155
Bailey, Lou, 13, 14, 16, 17
Bain, Lieut. James K., 263
Baker, Col. Addison E., 190, 192, 198, 209
Baldwin, Lieut. Col. Benton R., 409
Baldwin, Hanson (*NY Times*), 303
Bancroft, Stephen, 17
Barnes, Brig. Gen. Julian F., 74, 81
Barthaud, Mr., 191
Bartlett, Arthur (*This Week*), 281
Bean, 2d Lieut. Glenn H., 48
Beatty, Col. Sherman, 258
Beck, Lieut. William S., 161
Beerbower, Capt. Donald, 257, 287
Belden, Jack (*Time*), 125
Bellinger, Vice Admiral Patrick, 12, 13
Bender, Lieut. Frank P., 56, 57
Bennett, Lieut. Col. Donald K., 263
Bess, Demaree (*Sat. Eve. Post*), 277, 303
Betz, Pfc. John, 252
Bibin, S/Sgt. Michael, 45
Bickell, Col. George, 269
Bilby, Lieut. Col. Glade, 161
Blair, Brig., RAAF, 26
Bleyer, Lieut. Col. Julian M., 209
Boce, Lieut. Leslie C., 319-20
Boggess, Lieut. Charles, 389
Bohnaker, Col. William J., 46
Bols, Maj. Gen. E. L., 373, 407
Boni, Bill (AP), 346
Bottomley, AM Norman, 296
Bourgoin, Commdt. P. L., 368
Boyd, Capt., 318
Bradley, Maj. Gen. Follett, 213
Bradley, Gen. Omar N., 186, 229, 232, 233, 236, 251, 255, 260, 275, 283, 286, 288, 289, 300, 305, 306, 308, 312, 313, 314, 316, 329, 330, 332, 333, 371, 416, 424
Bradley, Capt. Jack, 257
Brady, Brig. Gen. Francis M., 11, 13, 14, 16, 22, 31-33, 35, 38, 63, 114, 115
Brandes, T/Sgt., 61 n.
Brereton, Capt. William D., 13, 100
Brett, Lieut. Gen. George H., 62, 73-74, 75-76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 99, 106
Brewster, Senator, 207
Brooke, FM Sir Alan, 417-18
Brooks, Maj. Allison, 234
Brooks, Maj. Gen. Edward H., 420 n.
Brooks, Capt. Robert J., 235
Brown, Sgt., 54
Brown, Maj. George S., 198
Brown, Jim, 188
Browning, Lieut. Gen. F. A. M., 228, 267, 309, 323, 324, 337, 338, 341, 342, 344 n., 351, 354, 355, 363, 365, 366, 368, 370, 371, 373
Browning, Mrs. F. A. M. (Daphne Du Maurier), 370




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Bryan, Wright (*Atlanta Journal*), 277 n.
Bull, Maj. Gen. Harold R., 229, 397, 417
Burdett, Winston (CBS), 156
Burke, Pfc., 54, 61 n.
Burnett, ACM Sir Charles, 26, 28-29, 30, 75
Butler, Maj. Gen. W. O., 252

Caldwell, Brig. Gen. Charles H., 11, 38, 57
Caldwell, Capt. Kenneth, 199, 206
Call, Col. Lance, 282
Callahan, Lieut., 306
Campbell, Lieut. William R., 183
Candee, Brig. Robert C., 217, 218
Cannon, S/Sgt. James, 61 n.
Capa, Bob (*Life*), 409
Carpenter, Lieut. John W., III, 44, 45
Casey, Maj. Gen. Hugh J., 21, 36, 60
Casey, Sir Richard G., 30, 81, 154
Catroux, Gen. Georges, 145
Chandler, Sen. Albert B., 207
Chapman, Maj. Gen. Eldridge G., Jr., 416
Chennault, Maj. Gen. Claire, 109, 123, 124, 126, 128, 129-30
Cherry, Col. Henry T., 382
Chiang Kai-shek, Generalissimo, 73, 106, 107, 108, 112, 125, 126, 129
Chiang, Madame, 73
Church, Lieut., 56
Churchill, Col. Lawrence S., 17
Churchill, Winston, 144, 145, 147, 154, 177, 188, 194, 220, 224, 230, 249, 251-52, 264, 288, 299 n., 308, 329-30, 414, 420 n., 426; Speech (4 June 1940), 329-30
Claggett, Brig. Gen. Henry B., 17, 18, 74
Clark, Brig. Gen. Harold L., 241
Clarnon, Col., 318
Claxton, Lieut. Arlie, 183
Clifton, Group Capt. Noel, 221, 289
Coates, Lieut. Lee, 54, 59
Cochran, Col. Phil, 374
Cole, Lieut. Col. Robert G., 285
Collins, Lieut. Gen. Joseph Lawton, 275, 290, 296, 305, 319
Combs, Col. Cecil E., 44, 46, 47, 58, 59, 72, 78-79, 117, 127
Compton, Col. Keith K., 181, 192, 198, 199, 200, 209
Coningham, AM Sir Arthur, 137, 142, 148, 151 n., 152-53, 155, 169, 172, 188-89, 237, 241, 254, 258, 259, 264, 265, 289, 296, 300-301, 305, 390, 397, 403
Connally, Lieut. James T., 47, 54, 59, 85
Connell, Brig. Gen. Samuel M., 98
Cooper, Col. Merian C., 119
Corbett, Gen. Thomas W., 147
Corniglion-Molinier, AVM, 368
Coryton, AM William Alec, 183
Coss, Lieut. Walter, 59
Coster, T/Sgt. Roger (*Air Force Magazine*), 408
Courtney, Bill (*Collier's*), 237-38, 344
Coutts, Col. James W., 403, 407
Cowan, Howard (AP), 409; story of gliders, 409-12
Cowart, Lieut. Col. William S., Jr., 310
Craig, Gen. Malin, 416
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 112, 116
Cronkite, Walter (UP), 346
Crowder, Capt. Murray W., 99
Curl, Capt. James, 185
Curtin, John, 30
Cutler, Brig. Gen. Stuart L., 323, 374

Dalai Lama, 144
D'Albiac, AM John H., 220, 227
Davies, Brig. Gen. John H., 56, 74
de Gaulle, Gen. Charles, 145
Delehanty, S/Sgt., 48
Delmissier, Lieut. Bruno, 117
Dempsey, Lieut. Gen. Miles C., 342, 355-56, 366, 396, 397, 398, 405, 414
Dening, Maj. Gen. Roland, 123
Deniston, Lieut. Dale, 183
Denny, Maj. Gen., 108
Derby, Lord, 226
Devers, Gen. Jacob L., 218, 223, 227, 233, 424
Dickson, Col. Benjamin A., 312
Diehl, Capt. John H., Jr., 199
Dietmar, Gen. Kurt, 422-23
Dietrich, Marlene, 402
Dill, FM Sir John, 177
Dodd, Howell (AP), 281
Donaldson, Col. John M., 276
Dönitz, Admiral, 424
Doolittle, Lieut. Gen. James H., 119, 232, 246, 266, 316, 317
Dorman-Smith, Sir Reginald, 106, 108
Douglas, Marshal of the Air Force Sir Sholto, 177, 183, 190, 197, 205, 207
Downs, Bill (CBS), broadcast about fight for Nijmegen bridge, 352-53
Drake, Wing Commdr. Bilby, 189



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Drake, 2nd Lieut. James T., 42
Drummond, AM Sir Peter M., 135, 159, 169
Duffey, Lieut. Richard E., 185
Duffield, Peter (*London Evening Standard*), 191
Dufour, Lieut. Jerome, 183
DuFrane, Capt. J. L., 89-90
Dunbar, Capt. Roger D., 311
Dusèval, Adj. Christian, 368-69
Duthill, Sgt. Laurence, 258

Eagleston, Lieut. Glen, 248
Eaker, Lieut. Gen. Ira, 208, 213, 214, 218, 222, 227, 232, 265, 317
Early, Stephen, 401, 402
Eaton, Col. Ralph P., 375, 379
Eddy, Maj. Gen. Manton S., 318
Eisenhower, General of the Army Dwight D., 4-5, 171, 173, 179, 237, 250, 251-52, 254, 256-57, 259, 260, 264, 271, 273, 274, 276, 279, 288, 300-301, 308-309, 317, 322, 330, 331, 333, 336, 337, 338, 339, 341, 351, 353, 360, 365, 372, 375, 376, 396, 399-401, 404, 414, 416, 417, 424
Eisinger, L., 203
Emmer, Capt. Wallace N., 269
Ent, Maj. Gen. Uzal G., 181, 186, 189, 190, 192, 195, 198, 200, 208, 209
Eubank, Brig. Gen. Eugene L., 15, 25, 28, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 48 n., 51, 57, 63, 64, 76
Eubank, Lieut. William E., 56
Everitt, Mrs. Betty, 311
Ewell, Col. Julian L., 379, 382

Fechet, Maj. Gen. James E., 315
Flavell, Brig. E. W. C., 397, 422
Flavell, Lieut. James, 422
Flavelle, Lieut. Brian W., 183
Fleischer, Jack M. (UP), 408
Foch, Marshal Ferdinand, quoted, 4
Ford, Lieut. W. R., 46, 47, 54, 59
Forster, Lieut. Col. W. L., 191, 194, 203
Franklin, Benjamin, quoted, 330
Freyberg, Maj. Gen., 138, 152 n., 182
Friedheim, Capt. Eric (*Air Force Magazine*), 408, 409
Friedman, 2nd Lieut. Morris N., 61 n.

Gale, Maj. Gen. Richard N., 373, 395, 397, 417
Gallagher, Wes (AP), 315
Galusha, Capt. Harry L., 56, 96-97
Gandhi, Mohandas K., 116
Gault, Col. Lord, 300
Gavin, Maj. Gen. James M., 223, 343, 366-67, 375, 379, 388
Gehl, Sgt. Stephen, 251
George VI, King, 264, 373
George, Brig. Gen. Hal, 17, 23, 52, 40, 57
Gerow, Lieut. Gen. Leonard T., 9, 19, 232, 276, 396
Gerrity, Lieut. Tom, 56
Gervasi, Frank (*Collier's*), 190
Gibbs, Maj. David, 39, 40
Gies, Lieut. Carl P., 46
Giles, Lieut. Gen. Barney McK., 236
Giles, Brig. Gen. Ben F., 218, 221, 241, 267
Gilmore, 2nd Lieut. Edwin B., 42
Glassford, Admiral William A., Jr., 71, 72, 76
Glick, Sgt. Nathan, 191
Godman, 2nd Lieut. Henry C., 47, 49, 59, 60
Goldsmith, Brig. R.F.K., 335, 359 n., 397, 420 n.
Goodrich, Col. Charles G., 148, 151 n., 155
Gorman, Tom, 191
Gorrell, Henry (UP), 156
Gort, Lord, 170
Graham, Frederick (*NY Times*), 408
Guingand, Maj. Gen. Sir Francis W. de, 336, 349, 397
Gumm, Lieut. Charles F., 256

Haaker, Ed (NBC), 281
Hahn, Lieut. Col. Delbert H., 209
Hakewill-Smith, Maj. Gen. Edmund E., 354
Hall, Rear Admiral J. A., 255
Hall, Col. Melvin, 221, 288, 289, 307
Halverson, Col. Harry A., 139
Hampton, Col. Edgar Wade, 11, 12, 37
Harpe, Maj. Gen. Josef, 421
Harper, Col. Joseph H., 378, 383
Harriman, W. Averell, 147
Harris, ACM Arthur T., 289
Hart, Admiral Thomas C., 33, 37, 38, 53, 71, 77, 78, 83
Hartley, Gen. Sir Alan, 105
Harvey, Cpl., 61 n.
Harvey, Capt. Nick, 300
Harwood, Admiral Sir Henry, 154
Hasbrouck, Maj. Gen. Robert W., 393
Hayman, 2nd Lieut. Eddie W., 61 n.
Haynes, Brig. Gen. Caleb V., 124, 129



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Heiss, Lieut. Gus, 56
Helfrich, Admiral C. E. L., 78
Heller, Lieut. James E., 207
Hennecke, Rear Admiral Walter, 296
Henry, Maj. Gen. Guy B., 314
Henry, Col. James E., 288, 318, 344, 350, 368
Hester, Maj. Clarence, 384
Hewitt, Air Commodore Joseph E., RAAF, 28
Higgins, Brig. Gen. Gerald C., 379
Hill, Gladwin (AP), 281
Hill, Philip E., 217
Himmler, Heinrich, 422-23
Hinds, Maj. Gen. Walter, 131
Hipps, Capt. William G., 56
Hiraide, Capt. Hideo, 11-12
Hirohito, Emperor, 37
Hitchcock, Col. Tommy, 222, 258
Hitler, Adolf, 244, 283 n., 286, 304, 322, 329, 421, 422-23
Hobbs, Col. Louis E., 112, 131, 288
Hodges, Gen. Courtney H., 314, 321, 371, 372, 415
Hollinghurst, AM Sir Leslie N., 344
Holt, Col. Harold M., 282
Hoover, ex-President Herbert, 91
Horrocks, Lieut. Gen. B. O., 355, 363
Hottelet, Richard C. (CBS), 281, 409
Howard, Col. James H., 234, 236, 241, 254, 257, 269
Hughes, Lieut. Lloyd H., 209
Hughes, Col. Richard D., 196
Hull, Cordell, 31
Humphreys, Bill (*Chicago Sun*), 281
Hunter, AVM H.J.F., 91
Hurley, Maj. Gen. Patrick, 91
Hutton, Sgt. Oram (*Stars and Stripes*), 281, 409
Hutton, Lieut. Gen. Thomas J., 106, 108 n.

Ilgen, Maj. Gen., 71
Irvin, C. B. (AP), 281, 315

Jackson, Lieut. Leonard E., 235
Jackson, Gen. Thomas J. ("Stonewall"), quoted, 342
James, Capt., SAAF, 131
Jenson, Lieut. Erling, 329
Jerstad, Maj. John L., 209
Johnson, Col. Alexander L. P., 80
Johnson, Col. Howard R., 344
Johnson, Brig. Gen. Leon, 190, 192, 199, 201, 208, 209
Johnson, Col. Louis, 116
Johnson, Col. Stephen, 379, 385
Jones, Lieut. Col. Bobby, 227, 301
Jones, S/Sgt. Richard N., Jr., 61 n.
Jones, T/Sgt. Wade (*Stars and Stripes*), 409
Jordan, Sgt. Paul S., 233

Kane, Col. John R., 181, 192, 199, 208
Kay, Leon (UP), 179
Keating, Maj. Gen. Frank A., 424
Keator, Lieut. Randall, 42
Keiser, Maj. D. M., 47, 49, 59, 127
Kelly, Capt. Colin, 47, 48
Kendricks, Col. Edward J., 306
Kennedy, Edward (AP), 136
Kepner, Maj. Gen. William E., 266
Killin, Pfc. William C., 54
Kinnard, Col. H. W. O., 376, 380
Kirk, Vice Admiral Alan, 255, 261
Kirk, Alexander, 147, 207
Kisner, Lieut. Lloyd, 225
Kluge, FM Gen. Günther von, 304, 322
Knerr, Maj. Gen. Hugh, 213, 214
Knight, Maj. Archie, 183
Kolliner, Capt. Robert E., 199
Konev, FM Ivan F., 422
Kong, Lieut. Wau Kau, 256
Konoye, Prince, 11
Korn, Capt. Virgil, 255
Krebs, Col. Frank X., 367
Krell, Cpl. Bob (*Yank*), 409
Kreuger, Lieut. Gen. Walter, 4
Krupp von Bohlen, Alfred, 425-26
Kurusu, Saburo, 24, 25, 31

Lammers, Capt. Howard, 100
Lathbury, Brig. G. W., 359
Laverack, Lieut. Gen. Sir John D., 90
Layden, AC Frank Masson, 74
Leclerc, General, 368
Lee, Maj. Gen. William C., 221, 232
Leigh-Mallory, ACM Sir Trafford, 220-21, 223, 224, 227, 228, 238, 245, 247, 254, 257, 258, 259, 260, 262-63, 266, 267, 270-71, 314, 371
Leland, Col. Gordon C., 127
LeMay, Maj. Gen. Curtis, 196
Lewellyn, Maj. Norman J., 11, 12, 13, 17, 37, 63, 99, 112, 118
Lillyman, Capt. Frank L., 278 n.
Lindsey, Lieut. Paul M., 89-90
Linlithgow, Lord, and his family, 121
Littauer, Col. Kenneth P., 220
Lodge, Sen. H. C., 207
Louk, Lieut. Max, 42
Loveland, R. A. (*Cleveland Plain-Dealer*), 281
Lovett, Robert A., 289



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Low, Col. Curtis R., 161
Lowery, Lieut. Herman, 56
Luce, Clare Boothe, 112-13, 114, 119, 120, 153
Lukis, AC Frank W., RAAF, 26, 73
Lynch, Frank, 190

McAfee, Lieut. James B., 56
MacArthur, General of the Army Douglas, 5, 6, 8, 10, 18-20, 21, 24-25, 30 n., 30-31, 33, 34, 37, 39, 40, 43, 50, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 60, 61-62, 66, 67, 71, 76, 81
MacArthur, Mrs. Douglas, 19
McAuliffe, Maj. Gen. Anthony C., 375, 378; his story of Bastogne, 378-86 n.
McCardell, Lee (*Baltimore Sun*), 281, 315
McCauley, Brig. Gen. James W., 289, 301
McCoughry, AVM, 148
McCreery, Lieut. Gen. Sir Richard L., 147
McGowan, Gault (*NY Sun*), 281
McKee, Col. James T., 310
McKenzie, Don (*NY Daily News*), 281
McLeod, Brig. R. W., 368
McMillan, Gov. Robert (Captain USN), 16-17
McNair, Lieut. Gen. Lesley J., 313, 314
McWherter, Maj. Robert C., 269
Mahoney, Lieut. Col. Grant, 119
Maillaud, Pierre, 409
Manning, Paul (Mutual BC), 408
Marshall, General of the Army George C., 5, 8-9, 18, 19, 33, 50, 81, 125, 130-31, 186, 188, 201, 202 n., 205, 214, 308, 309, 323, 360, 416
Marshall, Capt. John, 310
Martin, Sgt. Dale, 260
Martin, Maj. Gen. Frederick L., 12, 13
Martin, Col. Kenneth R., 224, 236, 239
Maxwell, Maj. Gen. Russell L., 130-31, 135, 136, 152
Mead, Sen. James, 207
Mears, Col. Frank H., 142
Menoher, Maj. Gen. Charles T., 18
Menzies, Robert G., 75
Merrit, 2nd Lieut. John, 46
Meyer, Col. Dyke, 238, 254
Meyers, Col. Gil, 238, 282, 300
Middleditch, Maj. Lyman, 161, 169
Middleton, Lieut. Gen. Troy H., 379, 380, 381, 394
Miley, Maj. Gen. William M., 336, 360, 393, 407, 425
Miller, Maj. Gen. Henry J. F., 214, 218, 259, 263, 267
Miller, 2nd Lieut. Paul S., 54
Mitchell, Gen. William, 156-58, 165, 229, 309
Model, FM, 420-21
Montgomery, FM Sir Bernard Law, 147, 149, 152, 153, 159, 161, 164, 168, 169-70, 181, 186, 193, 233, 236, 257, 259, 260, 264, 282, 301, 323, 332, 333, 334, 336, 341, 353, 359, 367, 387, 390-91, 398, 403, 405, 424
Montgomery, 2nd Lieut. Guilford P., 47-48, 49
Moon, Rear Admiral J. J., 261
Moore, Lieut. Joe, 41, 42
Moore, Ned D., 381
Morocco, Major, 94
Morris, Maj. Gen. Basil M., 27
Mountbatten, Admiral Lord Louis, 371
Mow, Gen. Peter, 114, 115
Mueller, Lieut. Alvin J., 59, 61 n.
Murphy, Lieut. Col. Mike, 277
Moyne, Lord, 207
Murphy, Col. William H., 12, 86
Murrow, Edward R. (CBS), broadcast on airborne landing in Holland, 346-48
Mussolini, Benito, 177, 197, 207, 376

Naiden, Brig. Gen. Earl L., 98, 111, 112
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 116
Newman, Brig. Gen. James B., 237
Nichols, Capt. Erickson S., 17
Nicol, Sgt. François, 369
Nolan, Col. Edward J., 318, 346, 408, 419
Nomura, K., 24, 31
Nugent, Brig. Gen. Richard E., 226, 230

Obrazov, Col., 180
O'Donnell, Brig. Gen. Emmett, 15, 43, 45, 47-48
Olivier, Laurence, 249
Olsen, Pfc. Edward R., 61 n.
O'Neill, Lieut. William, 146
O'Reilly, Tex (*NY Herald Tribune*), 179
Oser, S/Sgt. Albert H., 207

Paliser, Rear Admiral, R. N., 77
Papen, Franz von, 419
Parham, Col. Robert H., 330
Park, Pfc. Kenneth P., 61 n.



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Parker (a boy at Bastogne), 382, 383
Parks, Maj. Gen. Floyd L., 322, 323, 332, 342, 344, 350-51 n., 363, 370, 374, 386, 401, 403, 416-17, 420, 422
Parliment, Lieut., 306
Parnell, Rear Admiral William R., 37, 38, 71, 77
Parsel, Capt. Elmer L., 47, 49, 58, 117
Patch, Lieut. Gen. Alexander, 333, 371, 415, 416, 420 n.
Patton, Gen. George S., Jr., 186, 193, 237, 321, 323, 324, 330, 334, 335, 337, 371, 372, 377, 392, 394, 398, 415, 416, 423
Pearce, Group Capt. Charles W., RAF, 26
Pearce, T/Sgt. Clarence A., 409
Pease, 2nd Lieut. Harl, Jr., 47
Peck, Lieut. Col. George W., 260
Peirse, AM Sir Richard, RAF, 77, 88-89, 105, 112, 122
Perego, Lieut. Col. Frank, 269, 300
Perrino, Mr. (OWI), 179
Pershing, Gen. John J., 309
Peterman, Ivan (*Phila. Inquirer*), 281
Peters, Sgt. Walter (*Yank*), 281
Pierce, Col. James R., 403, 408
Pomorkin, Lieut. Col., 180
Potts, Maj. Ramsay D., Jr., 198
Powers, Lieut. McArthur, 185
Pownall, Lieut. Gen. Sir Henry, 77, 95
Preston, Capt. Joseph J., 90
Prichard, Lieut. William J., 89
Pyle, Ernie, 303

Quesada, Maj. Gen. E. R., 218, 221, 234, 254, 261, 282, 286, 289, 301, 306, 311
Quezon, President Manuel L., 37

Raff, Col. Edson D., 403
Ravenstein, General von, 173
Reed, Lieut. Walter H., 183
Regis, Lieut. Edward R., 248
Reinhard, Col., 322
Reynolds, Quentin (*Collier's*), 190, 191
Rhemer (German officer), 394
Richards, Col. H. C., 17
Ridgway, Lieut. Gen. Matthew B., 308, 313, 324, 337-38, 344, 348, 350, 369, 374-75, 393, 396, 405, 407, 414-15, 416, 420-21, 424, 425
Ritchie, Lieut. Gen. Neil M., 405
Robb, ACM Sir James, 400
Robenson, Col. John A., 80
Robertson, 2nd Lieut. William D., 422
Robinson, F/O Richard E., 225-26
Rockwell, Admiral Francis, 13, 16
Rogers, Will, 93
Romine, Capt. Charles, 409
Rommel, Gen. Erwin C., 136, 137, 138, 139, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 155, 159, 163-64, 165 n., 166, 168, 169, 170, 173, 175, 176, 181; tactics at El Alamein and Mareth Line, 181
Roosevelt, Brig. Gen. Elliott, 238, 253-54, 270, 274
Roosevelt, President Franklin D., 10, 24, 35, 37, 43, 54 n., 57, 73, 83, 116, 145, 147, 158, 177, 178, 184, 194, 261, 308, 366, 401, 420
Royce, Maj. Gen. Ralph, 98, 233, 250, 255, 289, 306, 314
Rue, Larry (*Chicago Tribune*), 408
Rundstedt, FM Karl von, 291, 304, 375, 388, 395; report on Allied tactics in the invasion, 291-96
Rush, Col. Hugo P., 142, 153, 181
Russell, Sen. Richard B., 207
Ryan, Cornelius (*London Daily Telegraph*), 281

Salisbury, Col. Arthur, 161 n., 170, 183, 237, 289, 301
Sanders, Brig. Gen. Homer L., 115
Sanders, Brig. Gen. Richard, 195
Saunders, AVM Hugh W., 220
Saville, Maj. E. C., 189
Sayre, Commissioner Francis B., 19, 37
Sayre, Joel (*New Yorker*), 191
Schaetzel, Capt. George E., 47, 48-49, 51, 59, 61 n.
Schaffner, Pfc. Edwin W., Jr., 61 n.
Schedden, Mr., 75
Scherger, AC Frederick R. W., RAAF, 25-26
Scherschel, Frank (*Life*), 281
Schlatter, Maj. Gen. David M., 240
Schlieben, Lieut. Gen. Carl Wilhelm von, 296
Schott, Col. Charles W., 224
Scott, Sgt. Burgess (*Yank*), 170
Scott, Col. Robert, 124, 127
Shannon, Capt. Paul, 233
Shedd, 2nd Lieut. Morris H., 46, 47
Sheean, Vincent, 402
Sherman, Gen. William T., quoted, 303
Sibert, Brig. Gen. Franklin C., 106
Simpson, Lieut. Gen. William H., 314, 372
Sinclair, Sir Archibald, 414



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Singh, Col. Hanute, 116
Singler, Brig. Gen. Herbert I., Jr., 210
Sink, Col. Robert F., 351
Sisneros, Capt. R. J., 82
Skorzeny, Lieut. Col., 376
Small, Collie (UP), 281
Smart, Col. Jacob E., 190
Smart, Norman (*London Daily Express*), 191
Smith, Lieut. Allen H., 186
Smith, Lieut. Bruce E., 361-63
Smith, Lieut. W. H., 59, 61 n.
Smith, Lieut. Gen. Walter Bedell, 317, 322, 330-31, 397
Smuts, FM Jan C., 144, 145, 264
Sneed, Brig. Gen. Albert L., 98
Somervell, Lieut. Gen. Brehon B., 177
Sosabowski, Maj. Gen. S., 343
Spaatz, Gen. Carl A., 3, 5, 177, 197, 232, 238, 246, 253, 254, 264, 265, 270, 284, 286, 308, 317, 374
Spellman, Francis Cardinal, 183, 342
Spencer, Mr. and Mrs. R. L., 13, 14, 16
Sprague, Maj. Charles A., 81, 86
Stahl, Lieut. Adrian K., 183
Stalin, Generalissimo Josef, 147, 158
Standley, Admiral William H., 158
Stearley, Brig. Gen. Ralph, 307, 323, 344, 374, 397, 403
Stephens, Sgt. Ralph M., 233
Stephens, Capt. Robert W., 241
Stevenson, AVM Donald F., 122
Stilwell, Gen. Joseph W., 105, 106, 108, 109, 112, 113-14, 119, 121-29, 131
Stockhausen, Max von, 419
Storrie, Brig. Gen. Carl R., 218
Strahm, Brig. Gen. Victor H., 131, 191, 217, 230
Straubel, Maj. Austin A., 86
Strauss, Lieut. Allison W., 56
Strickland, Brig. Gen. Auby C., 142, 151 n., 155, 160, 177, 184, 188-89
Stroh, Col. Claire, 190
Strother, Capt. D. R., 90
Struble, Rear Admiral Arthur D., 261
Stuart, Sgt. William, 263
Stumme, Gen. von, 159, 165
Stump, Rear Admiral Felix, 78 n.
Sturdie, Lieut. Gen. Vernon A., 75
Summers, Lieut. Julius B., 96-97
Sutherland, Lieut. Gen. Richard K., 19, 20, 23, 32-33, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 50, 55, 63
Sweetser, Col. Luther, Jr., 222
Swing, Maj. Gen. Joseph M., 215
Swofford, Col. Ralph P., 319

Tait, Jack (*NY Herald Tribune*), 281
Tash, Lieut. Col. E. R., 45, 58
Tasker, Lieut. Col., 387
Taylor, Col. J. Francis, 310
Taylor, Maj. Gen. Maxwell D., 341, 343, 344 n., 351, 369, 372, 375, 379, 388, 393, 401
Teats, Lieut. E. C., 45, 48, 49, 59
Tedder, Marshal of the Air Force Sir Arthur W., 135, 136, 144, 153, 154, 156, 159, 162, 164, 170, 176, 177, 188, 189, 197, 199, 205, 206, 264, 271, 305, 337, 339, 344, 414
Tedder, Lady, 176
Ter Poorten, Lieut. Gen. Hein, 71
Thatcher, Brig. Gen. Herbert B., 218
Thoma, Gen. Ritter Wilhelm von, 159, 165
Thorpe, Col. Elliott R., 76
Timberlake, Brig. Gen. Edward J., 175, 190, 206
Timberlake, Brig. Gen. Patrick W., 148, 168, 170
Togo, 27
Tojo, 11, 27, 31, 35
Tolstoy, Capt. Ilya, 143-44
Trenchard, Marshal of the Air Force Lord, 156-57, 229, 240
Tucker, George (AP), 179, 191

Urquhart, Maj. Gen. R. E., 343, 358, 363, 373

Valek, Cpl. Laddie, 252
Vallin, Maj. Gen. Martial Henri, 368
Van Oyen, Lieut. Gen. L. H., 71
Vance, Brig. Gen. Reginald F. C., 57
Vandenberg, Lieut. Gen. Hoyt S., 252, 254, 264, 270, 324-25
Vandewater, Lieut. E., 46-47, 54
Vermillion, Bob (UP), 408
Villamor, Maj. Jesus A., 58

Wade, Bill (INS), 281
Wagner, Lieut. Col. Boyd D., 52, 56, 57-58, 60, 72, 76, 78
Wagner, Rear Admiral Frank D., 72
Wainwright, Gen. Jonathan M., 37
Walch, Brig. Gen. Arthur G., 365
Walker, Group Captain, RAF, 13, 17
Walsh, Maj. Birrell, 59
Warliment, General, 322



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Wavell, FM Sir Archibald, 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, 83, 87, 88, 98-99, 105-108, 114, 116, 118, 119, 120, 124, 125, 126-27, 130, 144, 145
Weaver, Brig. Gen. Theron DeW., 255
Weber, Günther, 403
Wedemayer, R. G., 13, 17
Wellard, James (*Chicago Tribune*), 281
Weyland, Maj. Gen. O.P., 237, 254, 321, 324
Wheeler, Maj. C. E., 161
Wheeler, Lieut. Gen. Raymond A., 109, 112, 115
Wheless, Lieut. Hewitt, 54, 55, 59
Whitacre, Col. William B., 277
Whitaker, Capt. Roy E., 185
Whitelaw, Brig. Gen. J. G., 408
Whitney, Lieut. Col. C. V., 131, 172
Wilkes, Rear Admiral John, 255
Williams, Col. G. E., 238
Williams, Maj. Gen. Paul L., 241, 267, 278-79 n., 344, 370, 389, 403, 416, 424
Williams, Lieut. Thomas T., 183
Williams, Cpl. William W., 54
Willkie, Wendell, 152-54
Wilson, Robert (AP), 408, 409
Wilson, Gen. Sir Henry Maitland, 154, 207
Wiseley, Maj. William, 381
Wolf, Thomas H. (NEA), 408
Wood, Brig. Gen. Myron, 263
Woodbury, Clarence (*American*), 281
Woods, Col. Jack W., 192, 199
Woodward, Stanley (*NY Herald Tribune*), 346
Worley, Maj. R. F., 183

Young, 2nd Lieut. S. G. R., 46, 47
Yung, Col., 114

Zemke, Col. Hubert, 241
Zinder, Harry (*Time* and *Life*), 191



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